

**"WO GIBT ES SICHERHEIT?" -
Aspects of Narration in the
Novels of Joseph Roth**

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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The starting point of this thesis is the examination of a parallel between a possible mode of speculative literary criticism and Roth's own repeated assertions of the distance and separation of the literary work from the realm of empirical fact. Taking each novel in turn, I intend to examine the mechanisms of the critical transformation of the initial data during the production of a literary work.

Roth's distinction between an "artistic report" and a mere eye-witness account of an event hinges on the disjunction between the realm of empirical fact and the literary product which emerges as an object that is progressively discovered. The critical position developed in this thesis runs parallel to Roth's views on the literary work, and attempts to maintain a distance and separation from the objects it sets out to theorize.

In the early chapters I examine the peculiar specificity of Roth's work and explore and explain the operations of the aesthetic - the sets of relations or oppositions which are at work within the novels, distancing them from their starting point which is Roth's acute observations of contemporary society. Similarly, my critical approach to Roth's works attempts to avoid producing a mere copy of its object, and resists the temptation to conflate what the narrative is saying with what can be said of it.

I have examined each of Roth's novels in chronological order, excluding the early fragment Perlefter and Der stumme Prophet. This work was reconstructed after Roth's death from several manuscripts found in Roth's estate. The large contribution made by the editors makes it impossible to treat this novel purely as Roth's own.

By looking at each novel in turn, we shall see how Roth creates a uniquely stable and harmonious literary world and highlights from within the novels themselves the provisional nature of the approximation of fiction to reality. I shall examine how the novels are built upon a system of related themes and motifs, and have no hidden centre which explains them entirely. There is no notion of "depth" in the idea of the progressive discovery of the structure of Roth's novels.

In Roth's later novels, the writer's performance in a creation of a meaning which is based on language itself

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and on the readers' readiness to take it on trust, becomes of increasing importance. In the concluding chapters of the thesis I shall examine how Roth's last works play on the absence of any direct and particular reference to empirical reality by emphasizing the paradox inherent in a conception of language as a performative act. Although a set of meanings is created which has no direct extra-linguistic basis, the performative function has at its base a claim to be founded upon empirical fact. This emerges from an examination of Roth's last works, particularly Beichte eines Mörders, Das falsche Gewicht, Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht and Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker and takes the negative form of knowing that it is impossible to give an adequate picture of reality.

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All references to Joseph Roth's novels, short stories, essays and newspaper articles are to the latest four volume edition of his collected works, edited by Hermann Kesten, published by Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1975-1976.

The following abbreviations will be used for quotations from Roth's novels throughout the thesis:

Sp.	:	Das Spinnennetz
H.S.	:	Hotel Savoy
R.	:	Die Rebellion
F.E.	:	Die Flucht ohne Ende. Ein Bericht
Z.	:	Zipper und sein Vater
R.L.	:	Rechts und Links
H.	:	Hiob. Roman eines einfachen Mannes
Rm.	:	Radetzkymarsch
T.	:	Tarabas, ein Gast auf dieser Erde
H.T.	:	Die Hundert Tage
B.M.	:	Beichte eines Mörders, erzählt in einer Nacht
fG.	:	Das falsche Gewicht. Die Geschichte eines Eichmeisters
K.	:	Die Kapuzinergruft
1002N.	:	Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht
LhT.	:	Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker

Reference to any of the above novels, or to the short story LhT. will be made as follows:

in parentheses, i. abbreviation, ii. volume number,
iii. page number; eg. (Sp.I.95)

Other primary texts:

ROTH, Joseph. Briefe 1911-1939, ed. H.Kesten, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970.

Der neue Tag. Unbekannte politische Arbeiten, 1919-1927, ed. I.Sültemeyer, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970.

Introduction

Von den Gleichnissen.

Viele beklagen sich, daß die Worte der Weisen immer wieder nur Gleichnisse seien, aber unverwendbar im täglichen Leben, und nur dieses allein haben wir. Wenn der Weise sagt: "Gehe hinüber", so meint er nicht, daß man auf die andere Seite hinübergehen solle, was man immerhin noch leisten könnte, wenn das Ergebnis des Weges wert wäre, sondern er meint irgendein sagenhaftes Drüben, etwas, das wir nicht kennen, das auch von ihm nicht näher zu bezeichnen ist und das uns also hier gar nichts helfen kann. Alle diese Gleichnisse wollen eigentlich nur sagen, daß das Unfaßbare unfaßbar ist, und das haben wir gewußt. Aber das, womit wir uns jeden Tag abmühen, sind andere Dinge.

Darauf sagte einer: "Warum wehrt ihr euch? Würdet ihr den Gleichnissen folgen, dann wäret ihr selbst Gleichnisse geworden und damit schon der täglichen Mühe frei."

Ein anderer sagte: "Ich wette, daß auch das ein Gleichnis ist."

Der erste sagte: "Du hast gewonnen!"

Der zweite sagte: "Aber leider nur im Gleichnis."

Der erste sagte: "Nein, in Wirklichkeit; im Gleichnis hast du verloren." (1)

(1) Franz Kafka, "Von den Gleichnissen", in: Beschreibung eines Kampfes, Novellen, Skizzen, Aphorismen aus dem Nachlaß, ed. Max Brod, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1946, p.96.

Und nur eine Gegenwart, die den Unterschied zwischen der Photographie und dem Porträt nicht kennt und das falsche Dokument der Momentaufnahme höher schätzt als das echte des Bilds, aus lauter (berechtigter) Sehnsucht nach dem authentischen Bericht, nach der Falschen, weil seichten Authentizität des Polizeiberichts schnappt; nur eine solche Gegenwart ist solcher Überschätzung der "Platte" fähig, und dieser katastrophalen Verwechslung des Objekts mit dem Auge. (1)

The critical position developed in this thesis evolves as an analogy to Roth's defence of what he considered to be the most important feature of the literary work, namely its essential distance and separation from the realm of empirical fact. In several essays written in the late 20's and early 30's (2) Roth emphasizes that although the writer draws his material from the empirical world, a critical transformation of the initial data is effected during the production of a literary work. In his defence of his novel Rechts und Links (1929), Roth makes it clear that his work is much more than a neutral recognition of the disposition of things in the external world:

Der Leser, geschult an der realistischen Epik seit

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- (1) Joseph Roth, "Der Amerikanismus im Literaturbetrieb", Frankfurter Zeitung, 29.1.1928, vol.IV, pp.222-223.
- (2) see especially
"Die Tagespresse als Erlebnis", Die Literarische Welt, 4.10.1929, vol.IV, pp. 234-235.
"Selbstverriß", Die Literarische Welt, 22.11.1929, vol.IV, pp. 240-242.
"Das Privatleben", Die Literarische Welt, 6.12.1929, vol.IV, pp. 243-245.
"Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", Die Literarische Welt, 17. and 24.1.1930, vol.IV, pp.246-258.
"Der Amerikanismus im Literaturbetrieb", Frankfurter Zeitung, 29.1.1928, vol.IV, pp.221-23.

der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zu Proust und André Gide, ist gewohnt, das literarisch Gestaltete am Rohmaterial zu messen, das dem Autor als Vorlage gedient hat. Beschreibt ein Autor also zum Beispiel die Zeit der Inflation, so will der Leser, der die Inflation so genau kennt, diese auch im Buch wiederfinden. In meinem Roman aber findet er eine andere oder gar keine. (1)

Roth's early rejection of a conception of literary production as a simple and unmediated translation of empirical data into a literary display also has suggestive implications for the outlines of a speculative literary criticism which is founded upon the acknowledgement of the distance which separates it from its object. A brief survey of Roth criticism to date should demonstrate that the "katastrophale Verwechslung des Objekts mit dem Auge" (see note 1, p.4) is translated into an equally catastrophic confusion of domain and object in the field of literary criticism. As we shall see, much Roth criticism fails to heed Roth's own distinction between the writer's starting point, the domain of empirical reality, and the final object of the rational activity of writing, the transformed literary product. There is a great tendency to equate the domain with the object and thus to ignore the active and substantial process of transformation to which Roth refers time and time again.

Roth's distinction between what he termed an "artistic report" ("künstlerischer Bericht"), and a mere eye-witness account of an event, hinges on precisely this disjunction between the realm of empirical fact, which is given as

(1) "Selbstverriß", Die Literarische Welt, 22.11.1929, vol. IV, p.241.

part of our everyday experience, and the literary product, which emerges as an analogue of knowledge in that its object is progressively discovered. In his essay Schluß mit der "Neuen Sachlichkeit!" (see note 2, page 4), Roth makes it clear that a writer finds his starting point in empirical data, but then moves away from the real, altering it to reveal its true identity in a language of difference. Roth is characteristically vague on the way in which this transformation takes place: (1)

Eine genaue Kenntnis der Realität wird vom Berichter gefordert werden - nicht damit er sie detailgetreu benütze, sondern damit er sie beliebig und schöpferisch verändere. (2) (my emphasis)

Roth's vehement rejection of the eye-witness account which remains faithful to the minute details of an event entails the rejection of a naively empirical approach to reality. While Roth acknowledges that close attention to empirical detail is a prerequisite for creative art, he also stresses that there is no a priori limit, and that the "Wahrhaftigkeit", the truthful essence of a description of any event or person represents an elaboration

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- (1) Pierre Machery indicates the paradoxes inherent in a theory of literary creation. See A Theory of Literary Production, trans. by Geoffrey Wall, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p.68.

The various "theories" of creation all ignore the process of making; they omit any account of production. One can create undiminished, so, paradoxically, creation is the release of what is already there; or, one is witness to a sudden apparition, and then creation is an irruption, an epiphany, a mystery. In both instances any possible explanation of the change has been done away with; in the former, nothing has happened; and in the latter what has happened is inexplicable. All speculation over man the creator is intended to eliminate a real knowledge.

- (2) "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", vol.IV. p.250.

and an extension of the real:

Innerhalb der Literatur ist ein "Stück Leben" nur dann etwas wert, wenn es eine gültige Form gefunden hat. Ein ungeformtes "Stück Leben" ist nicht mehr als ein Roman, sondern weniger, es ist gar nichts, es kommt überhaupt nicht in Betracht. (Roth's emphasis) (1)

Time and time again Roth emphasizes the distance which must separate the writer from the material which forms the basis of his productive enterprise. In his brief discussion of trends in contemporary American literature (2) Roth attributes what he considers the poor quality of that literature to the authors' failure to establish the necessary distance between themselves and the objects of their attention:

Wodurch aber bleibt sie nur ein Zola-Ersatz? Ich möchte sagen: durch ihre primitive Beschränktheit, die sie der geistigen Qualität ihrer eigenen Objekte näher bringt, als es dem Autor gemäß ist. Durch einen Mangel an jener Überlegenheit, die eine produktive Distanz schafft zwischen dem Gegenstand und seinem Gestalter. Denn das Ausmaß und gewissermaßen die Beschaffenheit der Distanz, die zwischen dem Objekt und seinem Bearbeiter liegt, entscheidet die künstlerische Qualität der Bearbeitung. (3)

Similarly, criticism, if it is to be more than a mere re-translation, or re-ordering of material, must also maintain this distance and separation from the objects it attempts to theorize. A brief survey of Roth criticism to date will show how seldom this critical distance is in fact maintained.

Since the mid-1950's, when Hermann Kesten edited the first

(1) "Das Privatleben", vol. IV, p. 244

(2) "Der Amerikanismus im Literaturbetrieb" (see note 1, p.4)

(3) "Der Amerikanismus im Literaturbetrieb", vol. IV, p.222

incomplete three volume edition of Roth's works, the volume of Roth criticism has been increasing steadily. In this introductory section I will give a representative sample of the extensive number of works which approach Roth from the standpoint of traditional criticism, and which, to a certain extent at least, ignore some of the implications for critical approaches which some of Roth's own comments hold (1).

In Selbstverriß Roth warns both author and critic against a naively empirical approach which entails merely the translation of data into a pre-determined form:

Nun ist aber nach der allgemein geltenden Anschauung des Lesers (und erst recht des Kritikers) der schöpferische Prozeß in einem Autor ein viel primitiverer, ein grob-handgreiflicher - und ließe sich etwa so darstellen: der Autor "greift" nach dem populär gewordenen Wort "ins Leben", holt sich einen "Stoff" und gießt ihn dann gewissermaßen in das bereits fertige Gefäß seiner Sprache. (2)

The type of author in Roth's description typically raids the outside world for material which he then fits into his own pre-determined categories, retaining as much of the initial data as possible. This type of enterprise has parallels in the field of literary criticism, as Roth himself suggested. Erika Wegner's minutely detailed typology of the linguistic devices used to convey the thought processes of the characters in Roth's novels and stories (3) displays the typical empiricist tendency to reduce the

(1) See bibliography for fuller list of Roth criticism.

(2) "Selbstverriß" (see above note 2, p.4) vol.IV, p.242

(3) Erika Wegner. Die Gestaltung innerer Vorgänge in den Dichtungen Joseph Roths, Diss. Bonn, 1964.

writer's activity to a detailed categorization of narrative technique. Wegner's critical enterprise is thus merely the rigorous assimilation of the complexities of the fiction into fixed and pre-determined categories.

The merit of Ingeborg Sültemeyer's study of Roth (1) is that it brings together much hitherto unpublished material from Roth's early years as a journalist. Sültemeyer examines Roth's early feuilletons as the key to his political leanings, and concludes that his social-democratic sympathies are absent from the novels and essays published after 1926 (2). Sültemeyer deduces Roth's political leanings in a straight and unmediated translation of his journalism into broad categories of political thought. The metaphor of mediation obviously implies the existence of two separate areas of reality. Of course literature is part of the material social process, but this is not to say that its peculiar specificity can be glossed over: the work cannot be confused with what surrounds it and this is precisely what criticism of the Sültemeyer type is in danger of doing.

Wolf Marchand's interesting study of Roth (3) traces a line of development in Roth's work from the politically engaged writing of his youth to the novels of his later

(1) Ingeborg Sültemeyer. Studien zum Frühwerk Joseph Roths. Mit einem Anhang: bisher unbekannte Arbeiten aus dem Zeitraum 1915-1926. Phil.Diss. Frankfurt am Main, 1969.

(2) Sültemeyer, op.cit. p.231.

(3) Wolf R. Marchand. Joseph Roth und völkisch-nationalistische Wertbegriffe. Untersuchungen zur politisch-weltanschaulichen Entwicklung Roths und ihrer Auswirkung auf sein Werk. Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, Bonn, 1974.

years, where he turns away from contemporary political developments. Marchand asserts that the values of pre-first world war society which Roth defends in his novels have much in common with those which the National Socialists were forcibly trying to establish after the first world war. Marchand intends "Roths literarisches Werk als Teilgebilde einer bestimmten konkreten Daseinsstruktur zu untersuchen" (op.cit. p.7). While Marchand's move away from a purely "werkimmanent" approach is laudable, he too, on his own admission, fails to take account of the specificity of the literary work, which he views as categorically distinct from the material social process:

Dabei blieb vieles ausgeklammert. Ästhetische Fragen zumal blieben am Rande. Der Nachweis ähnlicher, wenn nicht sogar abhängiger Strukturen, Gedanken, Lösungsvorstellungen für die politischen und literarisch-inhaltlichen Probleme der Zeit rückte ins Zentrum. (op.cit. p.1)

The aesthetic disposition of Roth's novels is thus seen to be provisional, capable of being assimilated smoothly into a sophisticated understanding of social processes.

Much Roth criticism offers less refined approaches to Roth's novels. This type of criticism is restricted in scope to a re-ordering and categorization of a wide range of themes found throughout Roth's novels (1). Rigid

(1) The following works are representative of this type of approach.

- Rolf Eckart. Die Kommunikationslosigkeit des Menschen im Romanwerk von Joseph Roth. Phil.Diss.München, 1959.
- Werner Sieg. Zwischen Anarchismus und Fiktion. Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, Bonn, 1974.
- Alfred Kurer. Josef Roths "Radetzkymarsch". Interpretation: Ein Beitrag zum Phänomen des Spätzeitlichen in der österreichischen Literatur. Diss. Juris Druck und Verlag, Zürich, 1968.

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categorization of this type fails to take account of the roles the various themes play in particular novels. To ignore the peculiar operations of the aesthetic is to confuse the non-literary use of language which of course forms the basis of the novel, and the writer's re-production and elaboration of this initial language. These two short extracts from Roth's essay Selbstverriß should serve as a warning to critics who overlook the fact that the writer's task consists of transforming his original material:

Einzig bedeutend ist die Welt, die ich aus meinem sprachlichen Material gestalte (ebenso wie ein Maler mit Farben malt). (See above p.5, note 1)

Wäre der Leser mit mir der gleichen Meinung: daß die literarische Realität eine andere ist als die alltägliche - und deren Zerrspiegelbild: die Zeitung -, ich hätte mir vielleicht gestatten können, auf ein Publikum zu rechnen, das Gestalten und Handlungen als originale Erscheinungen aus dem sat-ten Boden der Sprache wachsen sieht, nicht als mehr oder weniger gelungene Imitationen der Realität. Denn das Material des Schriftstellers ist zwar ohne

ctd. from p. 10

- Siegfried Wlasaty. Das Bild der untergehenden österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie bei Joseph Roth, Karl Kraus und Robert Musil. Phil.Diss. Innsbruck, 1964. (see esp.p.89)
Rein äußerlich wird die erhöhte existentielle Beteiligung des Dichters an diesem Werk (Radetzkymarsch) dadurch offenkundig, daß Roth den Roman als Ich-Erzählung anlegt.
The naive identification of author with the narrator is an illustration of the extent to which Wlasaty equates the structure of the fiction with what lies beyond it.
- Peter Winkel. Thematic and Structural Elements in the early novels of Joseph Roth. Ph.D. Rutgers University, New Jersey, 1972.
- Edward Brett-Harris. Joseph Roth's depiction of the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. M.A., University of Kent, 1975.
- Sidney Rosenfeld. Raumgestaltung und Raumsymbolik im Romanwerk Joseph Roths. Ph.D. Illinois, 1965.

Zweifel "das Leben", aber ein in die Sprache verpflanztes und hierauf ihr entsprechesendes Leben.
(see above p.5, note 1)

Peter Wilhelm Jansen (1) views Roth's entire opus as the key to the "dichterische Existenz" of the novelist, and classifies Roth's literary output as "eine Projektion dieses Ichs" (2). This is an extreme example of a tendency we have observed in several critics. Jansen equates the content and structure of Roth's novels with his own re-construction of what is extrinsic to them, once again ignoring the extent to which Roth himself claims that his initial material undergoes a unique transformation in the production of his novels.

One of the most wide-ranging Roth critics is Claudio Magris, whose major study, Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (3) examines the relation of Roth's novels and stories to the major traditions of Jewish literature (4). Magris' perspective sheds light on the nature of Roth's political commitment and does much to refine Curt Hohoff's

(1) Peter Wilhelm Jansen. Weltbezug und Erzählhaltung. Eine Untersuchung zum Erzählwerk und zur dichterischen Existenz Joseph Roths. Phil.Diss. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1958.

(2) Jansen, op.cit. p.412.

(3) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (trans. by Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974.

(4) On Roth's relation to the Jewish literary tradition, see also Hansotto Außerhofer. Joseph Roth und das Judentum: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der deutsch-jüdischen Symbiose im 20. Jahrhundert. Diss.Bonn, 1970.

division of Roth's works into three distinct groups (1). Magris is in broad agreement with these categories but stresses an element of continuity, linking the early novels with Roth's later works. For Magris the key to this continuity is Roth's acute sense of the loss of the traditional hierarchal values of the shtetl communities. However Magris also treats work purely in terms of what is extrinsic to it. The extent to which he fails to take account of what the novel itself is saying will be made apparent in the section on Hotel Savoy.

The full scope of the initial analogy can thus now be

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- (1) Hohoff divides Roth's works into the following groups.
1. phase - Das Spinnennetz (1923) to Rechts und Links (1929) (polemical, anarchic phase)
 2. phase - Hiob (1930)
 3. phase - Radetzkymarsch (1932) to the end of his life (conservative phase)
- (see C. Hohoff, "Der Erzähler Joseph Roth und seine Welt" in: Die Tat, Zürich, 18.5.1957;
and see Geist und Ursprung. Zur modernen Literatur, München, 1954, pp.112-117.

Magris makes the following three refinements to Hohoff's categories: Diese korrekte und nützliche Einteilung... wäre...in bezug auf den märchenhaften und überscharf bewußten Nihilismus des Endes, der die letzte Schaffenszeit Roths in das ironische und mystische Licht des Wissens um das Nichts der Parabelerzählungen wie Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker (1939) und Der Leviathan (1940) taucht, zu erweitern; zu präzisieren wäre auch, daß schon in den ersten polemisierenden Romanen die Elemente der traditionalistischen und antisäkularistischen Polemik vorkommen, auf der die spätere konservative Position gründet... Hohoffs Einteilung in Perioden bleibt dabei im ganzen gültig und hebt zweckmäßig den Protestcharakter der ersten Romane Roths hervor, doch dieser Protestcharakter und seine spätere Aussöhnung werden nur auf dem Hintergrund der besonderen Symbiose verständlich, die Roth zwischen Austriazität und Ostjudentum, zwischen Imperium und Shtetl schuf. Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (trans.by Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, pp.15-16.

summarized as follows. Roth insists that the "künstlerischer Bericht" is neither an imitation nor a facsimile of its objects, and that the truthful essence of any description emerges as an elaboration and an extension of the real. Similarly, literary criticism must guard against a tendency to produce a mere copy of its object. Like Roth's model of an author, the literary critic must also assert her independence from the object of study. The critic, like the writer described in Roth's Der Amerikanismus im Literaturbetrieb, must avoid "diese katastrophale Verwechslung des Objekts mit dem Auge" (see above note 1,p.4) and resist the temptation to conflate what the narrative itself says with what can be said of it. Just as the author abstracts the truthful essence ("Wahrhaftigkeit") of a thing or event from close observation of it, so the fundamental characteristic of the relationship between literature and its critics must be the maintenance of an adequate distance and separation. Just as Roth transforms the objects which he observes as he reports them, so the critic must also transform the literary work, progressively discovering it without falling into the trap of assimilating it to what is extrinsic to it. Criticism is of a different order from the fiction it attempts to explain. In the same way literature is of a different order from reality itself. In a slightly different context, in a reassessment of the concept of an adequate contemporary literature, Roth once again stresses the importance of recognizing the relative autonomy of the literary work. Again he warns reader and critic alike against judging

it purely in terms of its conformity to what lies beyond it:

Selbstverständlich wäre es leicht, diesen Dummköpfen der Gegenwart zu erläutern, daß sich auch die Formen der Epik wandeln - wenn auch nicht so schnell wie die Verkehrsordnungen - und daß es ganz andere Gesetze sind, nach denen ein Roman "zeitgemäß" ist oder nicht, als das Gesetz der behandelten Materie, nach dem jene allein zu urteilen imstande sind. (1)

Roth's attack on his contemporaries' insistence on an unreflecting topicality in literature highlights the fact that we are dealing with two distinct areas of reality, which, although they are ultimately related (2), retain a large measure of autonomy. For Roth, the literary text possesses its own kind of truth which is not reducible to the empirical data from which it originates.

As the components of each novel are self-elaborating and bound to a specific context, I have decided to treat them as distinct from one another, in chronological order (3),

(1) "Zeitgenössische Trottel", Die Literarische Welt, 15.11.1929, vol.IV, p.240.

(2) see Pierre Machery, A Theory of Literary Production, (trans.G.Wall), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p.53.

However, autonomy must not be confused with independence. The work only establishes the difference which brings it into being, by establishing relations to that which it is not; otherwise it would have no reality and would actually be unreadable and invisible. Thus the literary work must not be considered as a reality complete in itself, a thing apart,... notion of absolute independence generally characterises that mythical thinking which attests to entities already formed without explaining their origins and development. The difference between two autonomous realities already constitutes a kind of relationship. (Machery's emphasis)

(3) I have excluded Der stumme Prophet on the grounds that it is difficult to establish what is the definitive edition. See W. Lengning's postscript to the paperback edition for details of the novel's reconstruction. (rororo 1033, Hamburg, 1968). I have also excluded the early fragment Perlefter. Die Geschichte eines Bürgers. (1929), Verlag Albert de Lange, Amsterdam/Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1978.

although similarities between novels will be indicated as they arise. I shall also draw on several of Roth's essays and feuilletons to elucidate the novels, for it would be wrong to study them as self-sufficient totalities. As the novels themselves build on other uses of language, as Roth himself has indicated, the novels are also influenced by the preoccupations of the writer and to a certain extent by the problems of his own biography(1). At this point I must emphasize that Roth's other writings are only drawn in to help explore and explain his novels. They remain a distinct group, given only limited consideration within the scope of this thesis. Roth himself furnishes the justification for their inclusion. In Zeitgenössische Trotteln Roth indicates that the novel maintains a relationship with other formations which are extrinsic to it:

Selbstverständlich wäre es leicht, diesen Dummköpfen der Gegenwart zu erläutern, daß sich auch die Formen der Epik wandeln - ...
(my emphasis), (see above note 1, p.15)

There is thus considerable cross-influence between different genres in this gradual shaping of a literary history of forms.

As we have seen (see esp. note 2, p.4 above), Roth firmly believed that the novel establishes its own truth, which is of a different order from the reality from which it

(1) David Bronsen has demonstrated the critical importance of certain biographical factors on Roth's fiction. It would be to do an injustice to Bronsen's massive biography of Roth to attempt to summarize a few of these factors. See David Bronsen, Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974. See also bibliography under David Bronsen.

originates. This feature of literary language is reflected in the content of the individual works. As we shall see with reference to Die Flucht ohne Ende and Zipper und sein Vater especially, the main characters retreat into a homogeneous and stable world of their own creation, whose very fabric is undermined from within the fiction itself. Just as the limits of the characters' worlds are defined from within the novel, so too the novel in itself must be viewed as definitive. This reinforces the point made above: as the literary work does not directly express an order beyond itself, it cannot be judged in terms of its degree of conformity to an external model, either a model of social reality or an ideal literary norm (1). Our examination of Roth's novels will focus on their considerable

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- (1) In his article "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths" in: Lenau Forum, 3. Folge, 1-2/1971, Claudio Magris judges Roth's early novels by their degree of conformity to both models. On the one hand he argues that Roth's chosen narrative perspective in effect excludes a view of the totality of social life (even supposing that this were possible) and thus reflects "das Chaos der Nachkriegszeit in den Augen des Gabriel Dan..." (op.cit.p.60).

Magris also measures Roth's early works against the norm of the epic novel, whose characteristics emerge in Magris' characterization of the works of Roth's early period:

Der Erzähler Roth der ersten Periode verneint die Epik in dreifacher Hinsicht: als Wahl und Unterscheidung des Wesentlichen vom Unwesentlichen, als Zusammensetzung von Ereignissen nach einer Logik, welche der Moment ihrer Unmittelbarkeit überlegen ist, schließlich als organische Beziehung von Henkai-pan, und zwar als Möglichkeit, den Vorgang und das Gesetz der Totalität zu erfassen. (op.cit.pp.60-61)

As we see from the above, Magris refuses to accept the limits of the early works, and emphasizes instead how Roth modifies the model of the epic novel. Our examination of Hotel Savoy will focus on the internal relations of the novel, not on its relation to an enabling model.

complexity, on how Roth simultaneously creates a uniquely stable and harmonious world and highlights the provisional nature of the approximation of fiction to reality from within the novels themselves. As we shall see, Roth asserts the novel's own truth, and draws our attention to the fact that this is a second order of truth, at one remove from what is extrinsic to it. To return briefly to Claudio Magris: in Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst (see above note 1,p.17), Magris notes that Roth's early novels lack "die Kontinuität und Entwicklung" (p.61) which characterizes epic narrative, refusing to acknowledge that narrative diversity can also be sustaining:

Die epische Spannung zerfällt in unzählige, unnötige und zufällige Einzelheiten, die nach Belieben austauschbar sind. (p.61)

An examination of Roth's early novels will show that they are more complexly structured than Magris claims, and that they do not derive from a single intention.

As we have seen, Roth's novels present their own truth: the components of each novel have no independent reality, and only make sense when viewed in the context of the work itself. We have already seen that it is a precarious enterprise to deduce Roth's political sympathies solely from the basis of an examination of his novels and essays. An examination of Roth's novels will demonstrate that the components of each novel derive their meaning chiefly from their position within the work and are altered and extended through their relation to other themes and motifs.

It is the aim of this thesis to examine the system of relations between the different components of each novel, and to avoid the reduction of Roth's novels to a single meaning. As we have seen above, an enterprise of this kind all too easily leads to an extensive exercise in paraphrase. Roth's novels are constructed on the principle of a relation, or opposition between several elements. It is a futile exercise to construe the novel as a rounded whole. The novel is necessarily incomplete because it is, as Roth himself admits, an abstraction from experience: writing, as we have seen, implies an act of selection and transformation.

We might arrive at a more accurate definition of the conditions of the novel's production by pursuing an analogy with the operations of parable on its initial object (1). Parable too transforms its original material by a process of selection, co-ordination and exclusion: parable is an indirect indication, a mere "Gleichnis" of something which cannot be described in more direct language (2). The paradox

(1) The analogy between the genesis of Roth's fiction and the operations of parable was stimulated by the ideas on parable expressed in a paper given by Prof. J. Hillis Miller to the Comparative Literature Seminar, Edinburgh University, February 1981. J. Hillis Miller, Parable and Performative in the Gospels and in Modern Literature.

(2) We have seen on several occasions how Roth rejected the idea of a direct eye-witness account of an event (see above note 1, p.4 and note 3, p.7). The essence of an event for Roth emerged through figurative language. Nun gibt es aber innerhalb des literarisch Wertvollen, also allein eines Preises Würdigen, überhaupt keine erdichteten, sondern eben nur echte Erlebnisse. Ihre Wahrhaftigkeit, ihre Notwendigkeit, ihre schicksalmäßige Bedeutung erhalten sie durch die gültige Form. "'Nur echte Erlebnisse'. Antwort an Herrn Arthur Eloesser", Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.7.1927, vol. IV, p.217 (Roth's emphasis).

of parable, and if we follow our analogy, of the operations of Roth's novels, is that the parable is a likeness which is posited on a fundamental unlikeness between what is given and what is displaced by it, what cannot be expressed directly. It has no hidden centre which explains it entirely. It is in fact constituted in equal part by what it is not. In his stimulating paper on the performative aspects of secular and sacred parable, J. Hillis Miller makes a distinction between the two types of parable on the basis of a difference in what we might term narrative perspective. The standpoint of the writer of secular parables is defined as follows:

He is down here with us, and his words about things visible can only be thrown out or thrown beside things invisible in the hope that his narrative of what can be spoken about, the fencing bear in Kleist's Über das Marionettentheater, for example, will magically make appear the other invisible, perhaps imaginary, line to which his realistic story, he hopes, corresponds. (1)

As we have already seen on several occasions, Roth also hopes to capture the essential quality of an event or experience, a quality which he believed could not be uttered directly. In his spirited attack on the conditions the successful novel must meet for a literary prize given by the S. Fischer Verlag, Roth clearly refers not only to the verisimilitude of a particular incident, but to the generalizing function of literary language, to its ability to ascertain what is at once general and particular about any incident:

"Das Erlebnis" als nackte Begebenheit, als Wirklichkeit,

(1) J. Hillis Miller, op.cit. p.4

als Historie oder Episode ist kein Verhandlungs-gegenstand für ein Preisgericht, sondern Rohmaterial für einen Schriftsteller. Es ist ein Unterschied, ob das "Erlebnis" für einen Menschen ein Schicksal bedeutet hat oder ob es, aufgezeichnet, die Leser von seiner Schicksalsmäßigkeit überzeugt. (1)

Like the parable maker, the prize-winning novelist must not restrict himself to the mere details of his initial material. He must point beyond it to reveal it in ways it cannot reveal itself. Like the novel, parable establishes its own truth: its "meaning" has no basis except in its own words (2). We can usefully apply Hillis Miller's definition of secular parable as a "performative utterance" to a consideration of Roth's novels. Time and time again Roth emphasizes that the "meaning" of his novels is based purely upon his use of language:

Die Zeugenaussage, also die Mitteilung, ist eine Auskunft über das Ereignis. Der Bericht gibt das Ereignis selbst wieder. Ja, er ist selbst das Ereignis. (3) (Roth's emphasis)

Yet there is another paradox inherent in the notion of narrative performance: the paradox is that the performance

(1) "'Nur echte Erlebnisse'. Antwort an Herrn Arthur Eloesser." vol.IV, p.217.

(2) Compare note 2, p.4. In these essays Roth asserts that meaning is generated by the use of figurative language alone.

(3) "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", Die Literarische Welt, 17. and 24.1.1930, vol.IV, p.249. Compare Karl Kraus, Weltgericht I, Wien, 1919, p.21. ...Ist die Presse ein Bote?... Nein: das Ereignis. Eine Rede? Nein, das Leben. Sie erhebt nicht nur den Anspruch, daß die wahren Ereignisse ihre Nachrichten über die Ereignisse seien, sie bewirkt auch diese unheimliche Identität, durch welche immer der Schein entsteht, daß Taten zuerst berichtet werden, ehe sie verrichtet werden,... Sie ist kein Dienstmann - wie könnte ein Dienstmann auch so viel verlangen und bekommen -, sie ist das Ereignis.

is only complete when something has been left out. Again it is worthwhile pursuing our analogy with the operations of parable. As J. Hillis Miller has indicated, the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23) is "posited on its own inefficacy" (1). If the hearer does not have knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven, he will not understand the parable of the sower either - "...whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (Matthew 13:12) The parables are thus "not a way of giving the word, but of taking away..." (2). By the same token it is impossible to deduce a single meaning from any novel by Roth. Like the parables, Roth's novels are in part constituted by what they are not, by what they cannot express directly. They too are posited on a relation between two elements, a transformation of observed reality. To derive a single meaning would be to overlook this determinate absence which is just as much a principle of the novel's identity as its fidelity to empirical data.

In an early essay in which he attempts to determine the standpoint of the creative artist, Roth expresses the belief that the writer indicates the way forward, of which society is necessarily unaware:

Der Schöpferische steht also fern der Gegenwart,
fern seiner Umwelt, fern seinem Volk: er steht
abseits in säkularer Entfernung. Er ist seinem
Volk nicht Bedürfnis, wie tägliches Brot. Er ist
Wegweiser an einer Straße, die zu betreten verboten
und unmöglich ist. Es ist schwer sich etwas scheinbar

(1) J. Hillis Miller, op.cit. p.8

(2) J. Hillis Miller, op.cit. p.9

Überflüssigeres vorzustellen: ein Wegweiser, der vergebens nach Wanderern späht. (1)

The writer's performance is the creation of a meaning which, like the secular parable, is based on language itself and on our readiness to take it on trust.

As we shall see when we come to examine each novel in turn, Roth exposes the very factitiousness of his language, the absence of any direct and particular referent, by playing on the paradox inherent in a conception of language as "performative utterance". Although Roth creates a set of meanings which has no direct extra-linguistic basis, this performative function has at its base a claim to be founded upon knowledge. It will emerge from our examination of Roth's work, particularly his later novels, that this knowledge takes the negative form of a knowing that it is impossible to give a totally adequate representation of reality. This is the theoretical nexus which links the apparently paradoxical relation which informs Roth's later novels: the emergence of a linguistic scepticism which is based on a view of language as an inaccurate guide to the measure of all things (2), and the persistence of the view that by re-casting his initial material in the form of a stable and harmonious universe the writer can reveal it

(1) "Der Normalmensch", Berlin Börsen-Courier, 27.11.1921, cit.in D. Bronsen, Joseph Roth: Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, p.217.

(2) I differ from J.P.Stern on this point. See Some Observations on Austrian Language Consciousness. Paper given to conference on Austrian literature, St.Andrews University, March 1980, reprinted in S.P.I.G.S., Glasgow, 1981. Stern claims that Roth's work "shows none of the language conscious preoccupations..." (p.111)

in a way it cannot reveal itself. In an early feuilleton Roth freely admits the limitations of his humanity and re-asserts his intention to restrict his scope to close observation of his immediate surroundings:

Was kümmert mich, den Spaziergänger, der die Diagonale eines späten Frühlingstages durchmarschiert, die große Tragödie der Weltgeschichte...? ...Jedes Pathos ist im Angesicht der mikroskopischen Ereignisse verfehlt, zwecklos verpufft. Das Diminutiv der Teile ist eindrucksvoller als die Monumentalität des Ganzen. Ich habe keinen Sinn mehr für die Weite, allumfassende Armbewegung des Weltbühnenhelden. Ich bin ein Spaziergänger. (1)

Yet as we saw above (see note 1, p.23), he cannot avoid the temerity of giving himself pride of place and of pointing towards directions we have yet to perceive, let alone follow. An examination of the novels themselves will focus on the devices Roth employs to undermine from within the fiction the apparent stability of the worlds inhabited by the characters. The conditions of the novels' possibility, the two extremes of the paradox, are worked out within the context of the fiction.

The characters in Roth's novels gradually discover that their world is fundamentally unstable, and they begin to realise the uncertainty of all that lies beyond.

Our examination of Roth's last work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker will focus on the ways in which Roth resolves the dilemma posed by his situation as a writer. He is, as we have seen, drawn between two apparently mutually exclusive positions. On the one hand he stresses the limitations of his humanity, and on the other, he

(1) "Spaziergang", Berlin Börsen-Courier, 24.5.1921, vol. IV, p.794.

claims to act as an intermediary between the certainties of the realm of immediate experience and the uncertainties of what lies beyond immediate experience. As we shall see, his quest for a solution leads him in a parabolic curve back to his own starting point. In the concluding section of the thesis we shall develop a parallel between Roth's chosen narrative solution and the solutions of the Hasidic faith to the problems of existence. In like manner, this introduction is governed at its end by its beginning. Returning to the paradox of parables with which this introduction began, we too execute a parabolic curve, re-asserting the distance and separation which we saw earlier was such a vital component of criticism.

The final dialogue in Kafka's paradox of parables, Von den Gleichnissen encapsulates the narrative solution Roth works out in his final work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker. Hasidic faith, very much part of the ethos of Roth's childhood (1) seems to provide a solution to the problem posed in Kafka's short dense text. We can summarize the main import of Von den Gleichnissen in the following two questions (2): what kind of action is performed by the sage when he says "Go over"? - and - what kind of action should we perform to obey his injunction? As we shall see, Hasidism combines a "sagenhaftes Drüben" with everyday life - the transcendental emerges from the

(1) For an examination of the influence of Judaism on Roth's development, see David Bronsen, Joseph Roth: Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, esp.chp.1.

(2) See J. Hillis Miller, op.cit. p.16.

immanent. The two are bound in an inextricable unit. "Das Unfaßbare" remains elusive, but it remains in a direct relation to everyday life. What Andreas Kartak achieves is in fact to enter the realm of parable, and in so doing he frees himself of the cares of everyday life. Kartak does literally "go over". His passage is reflected in the dissolution of the boundaries which separate dream from reality in the story. Roth's narrative solution thus evades the Kafkan double bind (1). Andreas is able to make the leap of faith which integrates "das Unfaßbare" into everyday life. Kafka's figure of speech "Gehe hinüber" becomes translated into literal fact within the context of Roth's final work. Miracles really happen. Only in parable however. The critical distance is maintained by establishing a separation between figurative and literal language, since Roth's language is defined by its difference from the language which enables us to construe it in ways it cannot construe itself. As we have seen from earlier examples (2), Roth effects a transformation of ordinary language.

The final line of Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker - Gebe Gott uns allen, uns Trinkern, einen so leichten und so schönen Tod! - (III.257) is a pignant demonstration of the fact that Roth remained irremediably rooted "im

(1) See J. Hillis Miller, op.cit. p.18

(2) See "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", vol.IV, p.256.
"Selbstverriß", vol.IV, pp.241-42

täglichen Leben", which is, as Kafka indicated, the only life we have. Roth was until the last unable to follow the sage's injunction, and his fictional realization of it in Andreas' action of "going over". His entire literary production can be viewed as a parabolic curve, as mere figures thrown out in the direction of what cannot by definition be understood. As we shall see in the closing pages of the chapter on Das falsche Gewicht, Roth's work as a whole tends towards a reiteration of Wittgenstein's opinion that the solution to the problems of existence amounted to no more than the disappearance of those problems:

Freilich bleibt dann eben keine Frage mehr; und eben dies ist die Antwort. Die Lösung des Problems des Lebens merkt man am Verschwinden dieses Problems. (1)

Patominos, the cynical eunuch in Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht stresses the finality of this disappearance:

"Wo gibt es Sicherheit?" fragte Schah.
"Drüben!" sagte der Obereunuch, "drüben, wenn man tot ist."
"Hast du Angst vor dem Tod?"
"Ich erwarte ihn, lange schon. Ich wundere mich, daß ich noch lebe!"
(1002N.II.1147)

Roth's own tragic and abrupt death might perhaps lead us to believe that he too followed the injunction of Kafka's sage, echoed in the words of Patominos, and finally entered the realm of parable.

(1) Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, cit.in Jürgen Habermas, "Der deutsche Idealismus der jüdischen Philosophen" in: Philosophisch-politische Profile, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, p.48.

Chapter I.

Das Spinnennetz

In most description and analysis, culture and society are expressed in an habitual past tense. The strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products. (1)

In his short analysis (2) of Roth's first novel, Das Spinnennetz, P.W. Jansen sets the publication of the novel in serial form in the Viennese Arbeiterzeitung in its historical context and concludes that the novel is a work of "brennender politischer und literarischer Aktualität".(3) He points to the irony attached to the publication of the final instalment: the literary editors of the Arbeiterzeitung were unable at the time to perceive the true significance of its substance:

Sie (die Redaktion) konnte kaum ahnen, daß die Aktualität dem Roman auf den Fersen bleiben werde. Die letzte Fortsetzung erschien in der Ausgabe vom 6. November; am 8. und 9. putschten in München Ludendorff und Hitler. (4)

Implicit in Jansen's lapidary summary of the historical context in which Das Spinnennetz first appeared is an assumption which underlies many dominant strains of literary criticism: the practice of this type of criticism implies the reduction of the formative process of the literary work to a system of interlocking fixed forms. By explicitly distinguishing historical "Aktualität" from

(1) Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature. OUP 1977, p.128.

(2) Das Spinnennetz. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1976, see P.W.Jansen, Nachwort, pp.126-32.

(3) and (4)
P.W.Jansen, op.cit. p.126.

the substance of the novel, Jansen consigns the work to the past tense, instead of viewing it as a formative process, unfolding within a specific present and embodying formally held and systematic beliefs. The total meaning of the novel, in terms of its social content, cannot, however, be reduced to the sum of its constituent elements. As Raymond Williams indicates:

The unmistakable presence of certain elements in art which are not covered by (though in one mode they may be reduced to) other formal systems is the true source of the specializing categories of 'the aesthetic', 'the arts', and 'imaginative literature'. (1)

Williams highlights the implications of viewing literary works as formal entities rather than as "formative processes". As we shall see later, Jansen's analysis of Das Spinnennetz exemplifies the essential reductionism of the mode of procedure in literary criticism which considers the work as a fixed set of interlocking forms. In chapter 9 of Marxism and Literature, entitled "Structures of Feeling", Williams writes:

If the social is always past, in the sense that it is always formed, we have indeed to find other terms for the undeniable experience of the present:... (for) the specificity of present being, the inalienably physical, within which we may indeed discern and acknowledge institutions, formations, positions, but not always as fixed products, defining products... if the social is the fixed and explicit - the known relationships, institutions, formations, positions - all that is present and moving... is grasped and defined as the personal: this, here, now, alive, active, 'subjective'.(2)

In his "Nachwort" to Das Spinnennetz (see note 2 above, p.28) Jansen effectively divorces the social and political import of the novel from the personal - a mode of literary analysis

(1) and (2) Raymond Williams, op.cit. pp. 133 and 128.

which blocks all attempts to view the work as the process of the articulation of complex, interlocking social formations. In Jansen's analysis, the terminology of literary criticism becomes indistinguishable from that of individual psychology:

...der aus den sozialen Ordnungen entgrenzte, wild gewordene Kleinbürger, der aus dem Ressentiment lebt, von seiner Frustration zehrt, der feige ist und aus seiner Feigheit gefährlich, weil er sich selbst blutige Gegenbeweise liefern muß, der gerade noch so intelligent ist, die eigene Lebensuntüchtigkeit zu erkennen, aber nicht intelligent genug, um sich in dieser Realität einzurichten, in einer...Borniertheit, dessen Borniertheit...in Aggression umschlagen muß...(1)

Jansen sees the substance of the novel in terms of two warring consciousnesses which complement each other to express and encapsulate the content of the book. Theodor Lohse's subjectivity is pitted against the constraints of his middle-class upbringing: in Benjamin Lenz Jansen sees "die Antithese zur institutionalisierten menschfeindlichen Anarchie des Westens". (2) Williams relates such emphasis on individual psychology, on subjectivity, back to the fact that relationships and formations which are still evolving are regarded as completed wholes rather than as stages in a process. The "subjective" approach was one of a battery of "more active, more flexible, less singular terms - consciousness, experience, feeling - ...", which we set against the finished forms of thought in order to make them approximate to "anything that we can presently recognize as thinking..." (3).

(1) and (2) P.W.Jansen, op.cit. p.127.

(3) Raymond Williams, op.cit. p.128.

Jansen's interpretation of the central importance of the image of the "Spinnennetz" in the novel serves to illustrate the separation of the social from the personal which is so dominant in this type of literary criticism. Jansen sees the "Spinnennetz" as being of primary importance not only as a key to the characters in Das Spinnennetz, but as a way of understanding the human types which appear throughout Roth's novels:

Mit dem Spinnennetz setzt Roth seinen künftigen Romangestalten das Symbol ihres Realitätsfeldes: Sie sind gefangen im Netz ihres eigenen Bewußtseins, und ihre Ausbruchsversuche sind terroristisch, lächerlich, matt oder von einem heroischen Nihilismus bestimmt. (1)

The term "Realitätsfeld" implies a sharp distinction between the domains of the private and the social. Jansen generalizes a complex network of human feelings and experiences as if they had reached a final state of development and subsumes them under the fixed category of the waking state of mind of an individual. This category is further generalized as Jansen extends it to cover Roth's "künftige Romangestalten". (2) By describing the characters in Das Spinnennetz as "gefangen im Netz ihres eigenen Bewußtseins", Jansen assumes that "Bewußtsein" exists as a distinct form, in conflict with other forms, for example, the social milieu of the son of a "Bahnzollrevisors und gewesenen Wachtmeisters" (Sp.I.47). Consciousness is no longer viewed as a process, but as a state, lived by a group which distinguishes itself by its fixed role within

(1) and (2) P.W. Jansen, op.cit. p.129.

a representation of society which has also been elevated to the level of a known and narrowly circumscribed form. Literary analysis then becomes a question of examining the relationships between the determinate elements of the novel. The substance of the novel is reduced to a series of contrasts between the main character types. Jansen contrasts Lohse and Lenz as follows:

Der eine wie der andere sind sie Männer ohne Eigenschaften, mit dem Unterschied, daß der intelligente, in der Fremdheit der ihn umgebenden Welt erfahrene Ostjude nicht nach Bestätigung strebt, nach Geborgenheit, Bürgerlichkeit, Assimilation und Einverständnis. (1)

Yet Jansen's oppositional analysis ignores the message of the text. The complexity of the living cannot be reduced to a simple opposition. This intricacy is encapsulated and expressed in the image of the "Spinnennetz". The image does not merely function as a convenient crossing point in an exchange between fixed units: it does not merely illustrate that Theodor Lohse is isolated from his social milieu. The image of the "Spinnennetz" in fact demonstrates the opposition of forces within Theodor Lohse himself, and within the society as a whole. According to Jansen, Roth uses the image of the "Spinnennetz" to convey the "Begrenztheit" of Lohse's consciousness. The scope of the image is however more extensive. Lohse does not only feel trapped "im Netz (seines) eigenen Bewußtseins" (2), he is also the agent: the "Spinnennetz" becomes a metaphor for his form of action:

Er entsann sich jener Spinne in den Sommerferien seiner Knabenzeit,...des atemlosen Wartens auf das

(1) and (2) P.W.Jansen, op.cit. pp.128 and 129.

hastige Heranklettern des Tieres, sein sekundenlanges Lauern, den letzten todbringenden Anlauf, der Sturz und Sprung und Fall in einer Bewegung war. So saß er jetzt selbst, sturzbereit, zum Sprunge entschlossen. (Sp.I.63)

and

Er nahm, ohne es zu wissen, die lauernde Haltung seiner Spinne an. (Sp.I.64)

Roth incorporates into the image of the "Spinnennetz" the synchronic process of conflict which works against the reduction of the process of human consciousness to a fixed and completed form.

In our analysis of Hotel Savoy (1924), we shall see how Roth incorporates into the narrative perspective the "Verdinglichung" which for Claudio Magris (1) is so characteristic of the social relations in the Hotel Savoy. The "Ich-Erzähler" Gabriel Dan is reified within the context of the fiction by the inclusion of his self-description. Roth reifies Dan's consciousness, translating it from a continually evolving process into a fixed and finite form. Yet his motives are at base ironic - in the romantic sense of the undermining of what the reader perceives as the centre of the work. Through the diversification of narrative perspectives Roth draws the reader's attention to his treatment of consciousness as a formed whole. By treating human consciousness as a formal entity, Roth alerts us to the conditions in contemporary society which work against

all that is present and moving, all that escapes or seems to escape from the fixed and the explicit and the known... (2)

(1) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums, (trans. J. Prasse) Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, p.34.

(2) Raymond Williams, op.cit. p.128.

The way in which contemporary society dealt with the potentially subversive forces of the formative processes of human consciousness was to circumscribe it and confine it to the domain of the personal: a fixed product entirely distinct from the broader spectrum of the social. Roth illustrates this bifurcation of the totality of the social and the personal in the image of Gabriel Dan looking at his own life, making an object of what is a formative process. By making his personal history the object of his attention, Dan effects a crucial disjunction from his life as process: he lives his life in a state of timeless suspension, in ritualistic myth.

In this section I intend to examine the devices through which Roth articulates the presence, the affective social content of Germany in the period immediately preceding the Munich putsch of November 1923. But Das Spinnennetz is more than merely the key to the true nature of contemporary Germany. I will also seek to establish the ways in which Roth counters the existence of the novel as a finished form, an actual object, and presents it as a self-conscious process - or how, in Barthes' terms, he

puts the mask in place and at the same time points it out. (1)

The danger lies in the fact that the terms of analysis of necessity divide the complex series of interrelating elements which make up the novel into distinct formal units - for example, the diversification of narrative perspectives,

(1) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero (trans. by A. Lavers and C. Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.40.

the alternation between the simple narrative and the present tense, and the function of the motif of the journey. I hope to retain the conception of the novel as a process by examining the developments within these arbitrary categories of analysis, and by showing the extent to which they interrelate.

In his extensive study of Roth's relationship to the East European Jewish tradition (1), Claudio Magris sees the evolution of Roth's "metapolitisches Denken" as a realization of the gradual disintegration of an organic "Werthierarchie". Magris does not reduce the novel to an examination of individual psychology, as Jansen does in the afterword to Das Spinnennetz. Magris sees the primary impulse of the novel as a reaction against the sharp distinction between the domains of the private and the social, a distinction which Jansen takes for granted in his analysis.

Für Roth ist der bis zum äußersten gesteigerte Subjektivismus der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ein komplementäres Moment ihrer allmählichen Vermassung: Die Ursünde der modernen Gesellschaft besteht darin, jede einzelne Kategorie zur autonomen und beziehungs-freien Realität erhoben zu haben (wie es zum Beispiel der Liberalismus in bezug auf die Wirtschaft und der Ästhetizismus in bezug auf die Kunst getan haben). Aller organische Zusammenhang des einzelnen mit dem Ganzen, in dem sich allein ein wahrer Sinn vermittelt, ist dadurch zerrissen. (2)

The absence of "aller organische Zusammenhang des einzelnen mit dem Ganzen" in part determines the narrative perspective of the novel, which Jansen described as a

Pendelbewegung zwischen Distanz und Identifizierung,...

(1) and (2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.224

zwischen olympischem Darüberstehen und Eindringen
in die Romanfigur,... (1)

Through the medium of a rigid authorial perspective, Roth articulates the immediate conversion of experience as a process into a completed and autonomous product. By reifying Theodor's consciousness Roth at once conveys his essential disjunction from the broader spectrum of the social and articulates the limitations of his view of the world. In the opening pages of the novel Roth uses the images of "Wand" and "Kerker" to convey Theodor's isolation.

Manches Ungemach hätte ihm erspart bleiben können, wenn zwischen ihm und seinem Hause nicht die wortlose Feindschaft wie eine Wand gestanden wäre. Er hätte den Schwestern sagen können, daß er sein Unglück nicht selbst verschuldete; daß er die Revolution verfluchte; daß er einen Haß gegen Sozialisten und Juden nährte...und in seiner Zeit sich eingeschlossen wähnte wie in einem sonnenlosen Kerker. (Sp.I.48)

Lohse becomes further entrenched in his isolation because he is unable to come to terms with his existence as a formative process, as continually present and moving. The army provides a system of explicit and known relationships within which the isolated individual can take refuge:

Immer hatte Theodor der fremden Macht geglaubt, jeder fremden, die ihm gegenüberstand. In der Armee nur war er glücklich. Was man ihm sagte, mußte er glauben, und die andern mußten es, wenn er selbst sprach. Theodor wäre gern sein Leben lang bei der Armee geblieben. (Sp.I.48)

Against the explicit and finished social forms encapsulated and expressed in the institution of the army, Roth sets the flux of human consciousness as it is lived, as a continual

(1) P.W. Jansen, op,cit. p.129.

process of conflict and resolution.

Anders war das Leben in Zivil, grausam, voller Tücke in unbekannten Winkeln. Gab man sich Mühe, sie hatte keine Richtung, Kräfte verschwendete man an Ungewisses, es war ein unaufhörliches Aufbauen von Kartenhäusern, die ein geheimnisvoller Windzug umblies. (Sp.I.49)

Through the words "fremd", "unbekannt", "Ungewisses", "geheimnisvoll", Roth articulates the fact that the complexities of lived experience cannot be reduced to fixed and definite forms. Lohse's unsatisfactory encounter with Frau Efrussi makes him determined to break out of the narrow confines of his existence:

Alle sollten es sehen! Bald wird er aus seinem ruhmlosen Winkel treten, ein Sieger, nicht mehr gefangen in der Zeit, nicht mehr unter das Joch seiner Tage gedrückt. Es schmetterten helle Fanfaren irgendwo am Horizont. (Sp.I.52)

Although the chapter ends with the opening out of possibilities, Theodor Lohse is in fact incapable of accepting his life as a continually evolving formative process. In order to evade the exigencies of his day to day life, he sets limits to his own experience, and takes refuge in dreams "vom siegreichen Einzug auf schneeweißem Roß". (Sp.I.52) His retreat into the private realm of his own subjectivity further isolates him from the social world. As the dream cannot be fulfilled, it comes to define Lohse's existence:

Diesen Traum hatte er in sich getragen und liebevoll genährt vom ersten Augenblick seines freiwilligen Eintritts in die Kaserne, ... Der Traum drängte zum Ausbruch wie eine Krankheit, die lange unsichtbar in Gelenken, Nerven, Muskeln lebt und alle Blutgefäße des Körpers erfüllt, der man nicht entrinnen kann, es sei denn, man entrinne sich selbst. (Sp.I.52)

Theodor is drawn forward in pursuit of goals which elude

him. Frau Efrussi comes to symbolize all that is unattainable for him:

Aus einer sehr weiten Ferne traf ihr Abschiedswort sein Ohr, aber in unentrinnbarer Nähe lebte ihr Lächeln vor seinen Augen; als lächelte das Spiegelbild einer fern sprechenden Frau. (Sp.I.51)

Roth encapsulates and expresses the illusory quality of Theodor's aspirations in the image of the "Spiegelbild". The realization of his dreams becomes an obsession, further isolating Lohse from the social realm.

Nicht für die Dauer eines Augenblicks vergaß Theodor, daß er jetzt endlich die Gelegenheit ergreifen konnte, Teile seines Traums zu verwirklichen. (Sp.I.53)

By presenting the Nazi "Geheimorganisation" through Theodor's eyes, Roth is able to present an emerging social form which in its early stages is taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and in Lohse's case, isolating. Roth sketches the emergence of a social experience which is still in progress, and which cannot be described in terms of completed, interlocking forms. The internal relations of the organization Theodor joins are concealed behind arbitrary phenomenal categories:

Nun war Theodor Mitglied einer Organisation, einer Gemeinschaft, deren Namen er nicht kannte, einen Buchstaben wußte er nur... und den Sitz dieser unbekannten Macht, ... (Sp.I.56)

The two contradictory impulses in Theodor's life are ranged round the secret organization. Because of the social isolation it entails, it increases his feeling of being trapped, the feeling which originally led him to break out of the confines of his former existence:

Am gräßlichsten war die Vorstellung, daß kein Entrinnen möglich war und daß er nicht mehr

zurückkonnte, zurück in die geborgene Stille einer Hauslehrerexistenz, die Freiheit war. (Sp.I.56)

Yet membership of the organization seems to be the pre-condition for the attainment of personal freedom:

Aber welch ein Lohn konnte ihm werden! Ich sprengte die Zeit, in der ich gefangen bin, den sonnenlosen Kerker dieses Daseins, werfe das drückende Joch dieser Tage ab,... (Sp.I.57)

The first task Theodor completes for the "Organisation", giving his notice as tutor to Efrussi's son, marks a distinct end to a phase in his life and further isolates him.

Diese Kündigung war wie ein donnernd zugeschlagenes Tor, Abschluß eines Weges, Ende eines Lebens. (Sp.I.59)

Lohse's contact with Ludendorff, a detail which particularizes the social context, also increases his isolation.

Heute war er meilenweit von den Menschen entfernt, mit denen er dieselbe Bank teilte. Er las den Brief und wanderte weiter... (Sp.I.60)

Roth illustrates the process of Lohse's gradual incorporation into the Nazi movement, a process which Claudio Magris characterizes as

Säkularisation schlechthin, äußerste Entfesselung der zentrifugalen Kraft, die das einzelne zur absoluten Realität erhöht, tierischer Dynamismus ohne Bewußtsein und Gewissen. (1)

Roth articulates the process of Lohse's involvement with the Nazi "Geheimorganisation" by juxtaposing the present tense with the narrative past, the form which reduces the relationships and institutions in which the characters are still actively involved into fixed, complete and explicit forms. As we shall see in the discussion of Zipper

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.229

und sein Vater, Roth re-unifies the succession implied by the inner logic of language into simultaneous experience, the present tense, to convey a sense of the massive actuality of an essentially alien and mysterious world. It is the fact of its presence that determines the mysterious quality of the social world. What is at issue is the articulation of a particular quality of social experience which, as it is still in progress, escapes classification or reduction to definite forms, even although it sets its distinctive stamp on individual experience and action. The contradictory impulses which characterize Theodor's involvement in the "Geheimorganisation" in themselves work against any tendency to reduce them to fixed and coherent forms. Roth articulates this synchronic process of conflict and resolution through the medium of the present tense. After Lohse's homosexual encounter with Prinz Heinrich the narrator comments of Theodor:

Ablegen will er hindernde Erinnerungen an die Ereignisse der vergangenen Nacht. (Sp.I.56)

In the passage quoted above (p.39), we saw how Lohse seizes the opportunity to break out of the confines of his former existence:

Ich sprengte die Zeit, in der ich gefangen bin,...
werfe das drückende Joch dieser Tage ab, steige auf,
zerschmettere geschlossene Pforten,... (Sp.I.57)

Roth also uses the motif of the journey to convey the presence of Lohse's experiences. As we shall see in the section on Rechts und Links, the journey is the stylistic device through which Roth rounds on the narrative tense

which presents

a past without substance; purged of the uncertainty of existence..(1)

The motif of the journey links chapters IV and V, maintaining the living presence of experience against the fixed and explicit forms encapsulated and expressed in the division of the work into chapters:

Über Abhänge und durch Niederungen führte der Weg...
Sein Weg führte vorläufig zu der Wohnung des Malers
Klaften. (Sp.I.62)

Roth also works against the reduction of individual consciousness to a completed whole by describing the process through which Lohse temporarily assumes another identity:

Theodor wuchs in Friedrich Trattner hinein. Durch den Körper dieser Figur, die er spielte, ging es zu Ansehen und Geltung. (Sp.I.62)

Roth diffuses Lohse's subjectivity and undermines the conception of consciousness as a formed whole by presenting the character as divided against himself through the image of the portrait:

Er erschrak vor seinem eigenen Bildnis. Es war, als hätte er in einen furchtbaren Spiegel gesehen...
Es ist mißlungen, dachte Theodor. (Sp.I.63)

Through the image of the portrait Roth highlights the fact that what Magris considered the main impulse of contemporary society,

der bis zum äußersten gesteigerte Subjektivismus der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ein komplementäres Moment ihrer allmählichen Vermassung: (2)

does not only result in the lack of "Allem organischen

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.37

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.224

Zusammenhang des einzelnen mit dem Ganzen,..." (1), but also in the division of the individual against himself. It is the mysterious nature of social experience in contemporary Germany that leads to Lohse's isolation. An analysis of Das Spinnennetz must not focus on an isolated individual consciousness as a fixed and explicit whole, but on the immediacy of social experience in solution. Roth documents the development of Lohse's consciousness as directly related to social experience, containing synchronic elements of conflict and resolution. Lohse's inability to penetrate the organizational structure of the Nazi organization with which he is associated increases his distrust. As the true nature of the organization evades definition, Theodor constructs his own version. The process of conflict and resolution is thus re-articulated as Lohse is seen not merely to be isolated from his chosen milieu, but to create and define it for himself.

Es schmeichelte ihm, verfolgt zu werden, und also glaubte er daran... Er wurde ungläubig. Hinter jeder klaren Tatsache sah er Schleier, die Geheimnis und wahren Sachverhalt bargen... Diese Lektüre befruchtete Theodors Phantasie. Er glaubte nicht nur, was er gelesen hatte, er kombinierte aus dem gelesenen Material neue Tatsachen und entwickelte sie im "Nationalen Beobachter". (Sp.I.67)

Roth treats individual consciousness as a fixed and completed form, as an absolute value only in as far as it can be seen to be a result of the quality of its interaction with contemporary social experience. Roth explores and describes the procedure through which mass organizations

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.224

in fact foster individualistic attitudes:

...ein kleiner Gott war er. Sich selbst übertraf er, längst war sein Glaube erschüttert, sein Haß geschwächt, seine Begeisterung ausgekühlt, er glaubte nur an sich, liebte sich selbst, begeisterte sich an seinen Taten... Er sah, daß jeder nur für sich arbeitete, er tat es mit größerer Anstrengung als die anderen. (Sp.I.75)

Theodor's feeling of anonymity within the impenetrable power structure of the organization leads him to erect even more barriers between himself and elements of contemporary society:

Es schmerzte ihn der Zwang zur Namenslosigkeit, unter dem er alle Taten verrichten mußte. Und je geringer die Kraft seiner Überzeugung wurde, desto mehr erweiterte er die Gebiete seines vorgetäuschten Hasses: (Sp.I.75)

It is the internal structure of the organization which determines that Lohse's consciousness is depicted as a formative process which does not reach any ultimate threshold of articulation. The desire to avoid anonymity drives him on as he prepares for the military action of the 2nd November:

War er am 2. November noch Mittel nur, nicht Führer, Glied einer Kette, nicht ihr Anfang, zwischen den anderen und nicht über ihnen, so hatte er seinen Tag versäumt... Mißbrauchtes Werkzeug fremder Lust war Theodor gewesen... Verantwortung schuldete er nur sich selbst. Er trug sie leicht, wenn sein Ziel erreicht war; er ging an ihr zugrunde, wenn er unterwegs blieb.

Er durfte nicht mehr innehalten. (Sp.I.89-90)

Critics have taken the figure of Benjamin Lenz as a schematic representation of the left, an element in the novel which does not adequately counterbalance Roth's minute description of his chosen representative of the

right, Theodor Lohse. (1) Marchand's analysis proceeds from the assumption that Roth accepts the clear division between the fixed units of "left" and "right". According to this interpretation, Roth translates the polarization of two rigidly circumscribed and explicit forms into a personal conflict between two individuals. Yet Roth himself rejected the narrow definition of such terms as "rechts" and "links". In an article (2) which attempted to set to rights the critical reception of his novel Rechts und Links Roth made the following assertions:

Denn in "unserer Zeit", in der man...mit dem Klang der Worte "rechts" - "links" nicht die Assoziation einer einfachen Richtung verbindet, sondern die einer sogenannten weltanschaulichen, erwartet der Leser von einem Buch dieses Titels, daß es die für ihn so wichtigen Fragen der primitiven Politik behandelt - Fragen, die ich höchstens streife. Es war unbedacht...zu denken, der Leser von heute würde dem Namen Rechts und Links eine breitere symbolische Bedeutung gestatten und...begreifen, daß dieser Titel weniger ein bestimmtes Buch kennzeichnen sollte als meine eigene Haltung den anatomischen, topographischen, politischen Richtungen gegenüber.

It is through the introduction of Benjamin Lenz that Roth effects the reification of individual consciousness within the novel, and thus alerts the reader to the conditions in contemporary society which work against

all that is present and moving, all that escapes or seems to escape from the fixed and ^{the} explicit and the known,... (3)

The encounter between Lenz and Lohse described in chapter XVI

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- (1) see esp. Wolf Marchand. Joseph Roth und völkisch-nationalistische Wertbegriffe. Untersuchungen zur politisch-weltanschaulichen Entwicklung Roths und ihrer Auswirkung auf sein Werk, Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundman, Bonn, 1974, p.64. ...die Organisation der sozialdemokratischen und kommunistischen Gegenseite,...scheint es überhaupt nicht zu geben.
 - (2) Joseph Roth. "Selbstverriß", Die Literarische Welt, 22.11.1929, vol.IV, pp.240-241.
 - (3) Raymond Williams, op.cit. p.128

does not simply personalize a conflict between right and left: it is through Benjamin Lenz that Roth articulates Theodor's present condition and relates it back to the affective social context of contemporary Germany:

"...Sie aber, Herr Lohse, glauben längst nicht mehr an die Idee und sind kein geborner Mörder. Sie sind auch kein Politiker. Sie wurden von Ihrem Beruf überfallen. Sie haben ihn sich nicht gewählt. Sie waren unzufrieden mit Ihrem Leben, Ihren Einnahmen, Ihrer sozialen Stellung. Sie hätten versuchen sollen, im Rahmen Ihrer Persönlichkeit mehr zu erlangen, niemals aber ein Leben, das Ihrer Begabung, Ihrer Konstitution zuwiderläuft." (Sp.I.95)

His relationship with Lenz shores up Lohse's dwindling confidence. Theodor reifies his own past, translating it from a continually evolving process into a fixed and finite form which is in harmony with his new self-image. He reformulates the Thimme episode to make himself appear in a better light:

Er ließ den Polizeispitzel Thimme wachsen, älter und einen Führer werden. Und nicht um die Siegessäule hatte es sich gehandelt. Das ganze Zentrum Berlins hätte gesprengt werden sollen. (Sp.I.118)

Lohse explicitly rejects the living presence of human experience for a fixed system of beliefs formulated in the past.

Er sprach von der Notwendigkeit, das Vaterland zu retten, und er gewann den Glauben seiner Jugend wieder. Alle Erfahrungen waren ausgelöscht. (Sp.I.121-2)

As we see in the section on Hotel Savoy, Claudio Magris characterizes the narrative perspective of Roth's early novels (those written before Hiob, 1930) as follows:

Der allwissende Erzähler verschwindet, an seine Stelle tritt - selbst, wenn der Roman in der dritten Person geschrieben ist wie Das Spinnennetz (1923) - ein genau abgegrenzter Standpunkt, der auf jede organische Gesamtschau der Wirklichkeit verzichtet,

die durch die ständige Verschiebung der Perspektive aus den Fugen geraten und zerbrochen ist... (1)

Yet by introducing the figure of Benjamin Lenz Roth offers the reader a "Gesamtschau" of the conditions in contemporary society which work against the continual presence of human life and seek to reduce it to fixed and explicit forms. Magris characterizes what he considers Roth's "epic" phase by reference to Schiller's definition of the genre:

In dem bekannten Brief an Goethe hatte Schiller die Epik als die Gattung bezeichnet, worin jedes Element oder jeder Teil "selbstständig" ist.⁺) Aber diese Gültigkeit in sich selbst,...setzte die symbolische Beziehung zwischen dem Universellen und dem Einzelnen voraus, das heißt, ihre Identität im Bereich ein und desselben organischen Gesetzes, das den dialektischen und dynamischen Vorgang der Totalität durch das Einzelne zum Ausdruck kommen ließ. (2)

(+) Fr.Schiller, Brief an Goethe vom 21.IV.1797,
in Fr. Schiller, Briefe, München 1955, S.456)

Yet we saw how Roth incorporates into the dual image of the "Spinnennetz" the synchronic process of conflict and resolution which works against the reduction of the process of human consciousness to a fixed and completed form. The figure of Lenz has the same function as the shadowy figure of Eduard P. in Zipper und sein Vater, of which Magris wrote the following:

Für Roth ist die aristokratische Stellung gleichbedeutend mit jenem archimedischen Punkt außerhalb der Wirklichkeit...der dem Autor als einzige Möglichkeit erscheint, den Lauf der Ereignisse zu verstehen... stellt sie für Roth...den einzigen Blickwinkel, der die Sicht über die Wahrheit und Totalität freigibt. (3)

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- (1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths." in: Lenau Forum, 3. 1-2, 1971, p.60.
(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.62
(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.65

The clear opposition posited by Magris between the "all-wissender Erzähler" of the "Epik" and

den genau abgegrenzten Standpunkt, der auf jede organische Gesamtschau der Wirklichkeit verzichtet,... (see above note 1, p.46)

is seen to be spurious. By introducing Lenz as an

archimedischen Punkt außerhalb der Wirklichkeit (see above note 3, p.46)

("Wirklichkeit" in the sense of contemporary social reality) Roth in fact asserts "die symbolische Beziehung zwischen dem Universellen und dem Einzelnen" (see above note 2, p.46), and highlights the ways in which the formation of autonomous human consciousness is a function of the concealment of genuine social ties behind arbitrary phenomenal categories. Lenz is the medium through which Roth relates Lohse's individual consciousness back to the contemporary social context:

Wie liebte Benjamin Theodor, den gehaßten Europäer,... den Klassenmenschen, den Gottlosen, Hochmütigen und Sklavischen,... Es war der europäische junge Mann: national und selbstsüchtig, ohne Glauben, ohne Treue, blutdürstig und beschränkt. Es war das junge Europa. (Sp.I.99)

Roth highlights the relationship between the individual and the universal by seeing Lohse's life in a broader context:

Das war die europäische Hochzeit, hier heiratete einer, der ohne Sinn getötet, ohne Geist gearbeitet hatte, und er wird Söhne zeugen, die wieder töten, Europäer, Mörder sein werden,... (Sp.I.115)

Roth accepts the formal implications of viewing human consciousness as presence. The "schematic" portrayal of the left, and Roth's failure to incorporate a clearly defined socialist programme into the work is not merely

a function of his strong subjective commitment as Marchand suggests. (1) Roth's view of human consciousness as a continuous process entails the realization that the novel can move across the wider basis of ideas and beliefs, but never beyond them: it is possible to highlight the gaps and deficiencies of the prevalent values and to show how they operate on the affective social content, but the novel cannot pass beyond them and reach an ultimate threshold of articulation from which it is possible to form a clearly defined programme for social change.

The journey becomes a metaphor for the relationship of the novel to the ideas and beliefs which it represents - the belief that human consciousness is not a fixed and explicit form, but a living and continuously evolving presence. Benjamin Lenz and his brother Lazar continue to work towards their goal of overturning the contemporary social system. The novel ends with the articulation of the presence of their task;

...der Zug glitt aus der Halle... Viele Lokomotiven
pfiffen irgendwo auf Geleisen. (Sp.I.127)

(1) Wolf Marchand, op.cit. p.61

Zum ersten ist Roths Engagement stark vom Gefühl geprägt. Wie er die einen liebt, so lehnt er die anderen radikal und leidenschaftlich ab. Dieses sentimentale Engagement verführt ihn zuweilen zu Gefühlsausbrüchen, die an die Grenze zum Kitsch reichen...

Chapter II.

Hotel Savoy

Ordinary facts are arranged within time, strung along its length as on a thread. There they have their antecedents and their consequences, which crowd tightly together and press hard one upon the other without any pause. This has its importance for any narrative, of which continuity and successiveness are the soul.

Yet what is to be done with events that have no place of their own in time; events that have occurred too late, after the whole of time has been distributed, divided and allocated; events that have been left in the cold, unregistered, hanging in the air, homeless, and errant?

Could it be that time is too narrow for all events? Could it happen that all the seats within time might have been sold? Worried, we run along the train of events, preparing ourselves for the journey.

For heaven's sake, is there perhaps some kind of bidding for time? Conductor, where are you?

Don't let's get excited. Don't let's panic; we can settle it all calmly within our own terms of reference.

Have you ever heard of parallel streams of time within a two-track time? Yes, there are such branch lines of time, somewhat illegal and suspect, but when, like us, one is burdened with contraband of supernumery events that cannot be registered, one cannot be too fussy. Let us try to find at some point of history such a branch line, a blind track onto which to shunt these illegal events. There is nothing to fear. It will all happen imperceptibly: the reader won't feel any shock. Who knows? Perhaps even now, while we mention it, the doubtful maneuver is already behind us and we are, in fact proceeding into a cul-de-sac. (1)

Der Zug glitt aus der Halle... Viele Lokomotiven pfiffen irgendwo auf Geleisen. (Sp.I.127)

In this chapter we will see how the final image of Das Spinnennetz is metaphorically broadened in Hotel Savoy. In the later novel Roth displays sympathy for Bruno Schulz' mythological

(1) Bruno Schulz. "The Age of Genius." In: Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass (trans.by Celina Wienewska), Pan Books, London, 1980, p.14.

traveller. By exploiting the "branch lines" of his narrative, Roth is able to accommodate his "contraband of super-numery events" without affecting the continuity and successiveness of the narrative line. We shall see that the opening of a branch line is a simple operation. The reader, Schulz' patient traveller, does not feel any shock. An analysis of the sets of relations, or oppositions between the different elements of the composition of the novel will, I think, lead us to very different conclusions from those drawn by the Italian Germanist Claudio Magris. Magris argues (1) that the "structural radicalism" of Roth's early novels entails the complete breakdown of the continuity of the narrative:

Bis zum Wendepunkt, den der Hiob (1930) bezeichnet,... lehnt (Roth) das literarische Werk ab, das als Synthese verstanden wird... Dem ethisch-politischen Protest entspricht bis zum Hiob ein struktureller Radikalismus, der darauf gerichtet ist, die Synthese, die Aufhebung, die Geschichte zu zerstören und der durch die formale Zersplitterung die Unmöglichkeit verkündet, in den täglichen Ereignissen Bedeutungen zu erkennen, die über die Zufälligkeit hinausgehen.(2)

Magris' argument is flawed on a second count. If we turn to the second meaning of "Geschichte" and understand it to refer to the material social process, it is apparent that the literary work cannot mimic empirical reality in the way Magris suggests. (3) As we saw in the introduction, the

(1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths", in: Lenau Forum, 3. 1-2/1971, pp.58-78

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.60.

(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.67. Magris contrasts Roth's later works with what he considers to be the structure and aims of the novels written in the earlier period: "Der Roman ist wieder an dem Abstand einer konsequenten und geschlossenen Fabel erkennbar und hört auf, ein fragmentarischer und experimenteller Versuch zu sein, der Wirklichkeit näherzukommen."

literary work certainly has its origins in empirical reality, but moves away from it, changing it in the process and revealing its true identity in a language of difference. The "branch lines" of Roth's narrative contribute to the total literary profile which emerges in Hotel Savoy.

In this chapter I intend to argue that it is precisely through "formale Zersplitterung" (see above p.50, note 2) that Roth gives the reader access to the necessary conditions of existence in the chaotic period immediately after the First World War. An examination of narrative perspective in the novel Hotel Savoy will illumine what Lukács terms "der Gegensatz: Zufall-Notwendigkeit und seine dialektische Aufhebung" (1) and show that Magris' conception of the details of the narrative as mere contingencies, "Zufälligkeiten", is too one-sided. The disruption of the "geschlossenen Aufbau des traditionellen Romans" (2) does not imply the complete lack of structure which, according to Magris, characterizes the novels of the early period. In the same essay Magris claims that Roth rejects the closed form of the epic "als Zusammensetzung von Ereignissen nach einer Logik, welche der Moment ihrer Unmittelbarkeit überlegen ist".(3) An examination of the internal logic of the construction of Roth's Hotel Savoy and of the subtle orchestration of the different themes and motifs

(1) Georg Lukács. Reportage oder Gestaltung? Essays über Realismus, (collected works, vol.4), Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied/Berlin, 1971, p.48

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.60

(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

will, I think, show that it is the progressive undermining of structure that in fact imposes structure upon the novel. Magris characterizes Roth's writing in the years preceding the publication of Hiob in 1930 as " ein experimenteller Versuch...der Wirklichkeit näherzukommen." (1) The difficulty with Magris' description of the novels of the early period is that it cannot be reconciled with what he considers to be the essential nature of the social background of the novel, namely "das Chaos der Nachkriegszeit". (2) In what Magris admits as the confusion of the post-war world, the real is of necessity imperceptible. Thus we must add a further dimension to the picture of the nature of literary production which was developed in the introduction. The literary work is not only an elaboration and extension of the real. An image of contemporary reality also emerges through the fragments of the ideas and beliefs which attempt to construct it: it is not constituted entirely by them. The form of the novel Hotel Savoy cannot then be attributed to capricious experimentation on Roth's part. It arises from the fact that at a certain point in history, at a particular stage in historical development, "reality" conceals itself in the categories it offers for inspection. In like manner no-one in the Hotel Savoy guesses that the owner, Kaleguropulos, conceals his true identity behind the sinister figure of the ageing "Liftboy" Ignatz.

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.67

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.60



Like the mysterious master of the castle in Kafka's Das Schloß, Kaleguropulos conceals his true identity completely behind an arbitrary phenomenal category - the owner of the prestigious Hotel Savoy. Gabriel Dan's attempts to find out the identity of Kaleguropulos are met only with further confirmation of his essential mysteriousness:

Stasia kannte ihn nicht. Niemand kannte ihn. Niemand hatte ihn gesehen. (H.S.I.146)

Even before Gabriel Dan's curiosity about the identity of Kaleguropulos is aroused, the hotel owner exists for him only as a designation. On his arrival Dan reads the notice on the door of his hotel room:

Nach zehn Uhr abends wird um Ruhe gebeten. Für abhanden gekommene Schmuckstücke keine Haftung. Tresor im Hause.

Hochachtungsvoll
Kaleguropulos, Hotelwirt. (H.S.I.133)

The name evokes distant memories of unhappy hours spent in the classroom. Dan reacts to Kaleguropulos as a mere designation:

Der Name war fremd, ein griechischer Name, ich bekam Lust, ihn zu deklinieren: Kaleguropulos, Kaleguropulu, Kaleguropulo -- (H.S.I.133)

Dan's desire to decline Kaleguropulos' name becomes a symbol for the latter's existence within a fixed set of relations which betray nothing about his "real" self. Kaleguropulos is not the only figure in the Hotel Savoy who is shrouded in mystery. As a newcomer to the hotel, Gabriel Dan is unable to penetrate the mysterious sets of relations which obtain between the other occupants:

Die Schicksale Santschins und Hirsch Fisches

beschäftigten mich. Alle Menschen schienen hier von Geheimnissen umgeben. Träumte ich das? Was wohnte hinter der, hinter jener Tür? (H.S.I.146)

Dan's reaction to the mysterious people who surround him is to question their empirical reality: "Träumte ich das?" (H.S.I.146) Dan's response encapsulates and expresses the impossibility of looking behind the thin veil of phenomenal categories to observe reality. The imperceptibility of empirical reality is re-translated by Roth, as indeed by Kafka, into spatial distortion. Roth conveys the essentially alien and mysterious nature of reality by re-presenting it in pictorial images which undermine any conception of reality as coherent and comprehensible. Gabriel Dan describes Santchin's room in the Hotel Savoy, the "Waschküche" in the following terms:

Überhaupt verringern sich in dieser Ecke alle Dimensionen, das kommt von dem grauen Dunst der Waschküche, der die Augen betäubt, Distanzen verkleinert, die Mauer anschwellen läßt. Es ist schwer, sich an diese Luft zu gewöhnen, die in ständiger Wallung bleibt, Konturen verwischt, feucht und warm riecht, die Menschen in unwirkliche Knäuel verwandelt. (H.S.I.144)

The image of the unfathomable depths of Santchin's "Waschküche" becomes a metaphor for the essentially impenetrable nature of reality. The individual is so alienated that he is described in terms which belie his essential humanity, - "unwirkliche Knäuel" (H.S.I.144). By highlighting the "Unwirklichkeit" of the occupants of the Hotel Savoy, Roth conveys to the reader that the nature of contemporary reality is in fact its very unreality. From within the same historical context Franz Kafka wrote:

Das Gewöhnliche ist ja auch schon ein Wunder! Ich

zeichne es nur auf. (1)

and -

...wirkliche Realität ist immer unrealistisch. (2)

Kafka's second comment refers to the deceptive qualities of photography. Roth also uses the example of photography to warn both author and reader against an unreflecting acceptance of empirical data. According to Roth, it is the author's fascination for literary "Rohmaterial" which

...verschuldet die zweite...Verwechslung: des Simplen mit dem Unmittelbaren; der Mitteilung mit dem Bericht; des photographierten Moments mit dem andauernden Leben; der "Aufnahme" mit der Realität. Also verliert selbst das Dokumentarische die Fähigkeit, authentisch zu sein. Beinahe brachte man dem Photographen ein stärkeres Vertrauen entgegen als seinem Objekt, ein stärkeres Vertrauen der Platte als der Wirklichkeit. (3)

For Roth as for Kafka, contemporary reality was essentially impenetrable and mysterious. Roth does not deny the importance of close observation of the phenomenal categories which present themselves to the author: however, as the real at certain points in history is empirically imperceptible, it falls to the author to re-define and re-constitute it so as to reveal its gaps and absences:

Sein Werk ist niemals von der Realität gelöst, sondern in Wahrheit (durch das Mittel der Sprache) umgewandelte Realität. (4)

Both Roth and Kafka assert the primacy of the author over mere mechanical means of registering empirical categories. By admitting "daß die literarische Realität eine andere

(1) Gustav Janouch. Gespräche mit Kafka, Frankfurt, 1961, p.42

(2) Gustav Janouch, op.cit. p. 103

(3) Joseph Roth. "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit'!", Die Literarische Welt, 17.und 24.1.1930, vol.IV., p.247

(4) Joseph Roth, op.cit. p.251

ist als die alltägliche" (1), Roth accepts that there is implicit within the operations of the text a system of ideas and beliefs which works on and re-constitutes ideology in ways which are only partially determined by that ideology. It is thus apparent that the selection of detail in the work is not random. We can therefore counter Magris' assertion that:

Der Erzähler Roth der ersten Periode verneint die Epik in dreifacher Hinsicht: als Wahl und Unterscheidung des Wesentlichen vom Unwesentlichen,... (2)

Indeed it is only by distinguishing the essential from the inessential elements that the possibility arises "den Vorgang und das Gesetz der Totalität zu erfassen." (3) Magris continues:

Das zerbrochene Universum ist kein Spiegel, dessen Bruchstücke eine vollständige Fähigkeit behalten, die Welt zu reflektieren;... (4)

Underlying Magris' statement is the assumption that "die Welt" represents a coherent system which can be "reflected" in an art form. For Magris, Roth's rejection of "die Epik" in the period up to 1930 amounted to a refusal to come to terms with the world as "den Vorgang und das Gesetz der Totalität" (5):

...sondern das Universum stellt ein mechanisches Triebwerk dar, dessen Stücke zu nutzlosen Gegenständen werden, wenn sie einmal auseinandergenommen worden sind. (6)

(1) Joseph Roth. "Selbstverriß", Die Literarische Welt, 22.11.1929, vol.IV., p.241

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. pp.60-61

(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

(4) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

(5) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

(6) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

Yet for Roth as for Kafka the world was essentially alien and mysterious, not internally consistent and therefore not subject to unmediated reflection. At a point in history when the "real" was difficult to fathom, the only way in which Roth could construct a coherent picture of the world was to reveal its very gaps and inconsistencies. Magris asserts of the early novels:

Roth versucht, das Fehlen von Bedeutungen dadurch darzustellen, daß er die Auswahl des Wesentlichen ablehnt... Die epische Spannung zerfällt in unzählige, unnötige und zufällige Einzelheiten, die nach Belieben austauschbar sind. (1)

Yet we shall see that the ways in which Roth alerts the reader to the distortions of the "real" in Rechts und Links are by no means arbitrary. Here as in the earlier work we shall see how the internal logic of the work is composed of the establishment of sets of temporal opposites and of the central importance of the motif of the journey. The motif of the journey also has a significant function in the structure of Die Flucht ohne Ende. While Magris admits that a picture of the world can be constructed by the absence of any relationship between objects, he conflates the "Gleichgültigkeit" of some of the characters in Roth's works with the logic of the construction of the novel.

So wie eine photoelektrische Zelle auf jeden Lichtreiz reagiert, verzeichnet der Erzähler jeden Gegenstand, aber nicht, um die vielfältigen Beziehungen einzufangen - wie es Lenin verlangte -, sondern um damit das Fehlen jeder Beziehung zu unterstreichen. Die Gleichgültigkeit ist Kriterium und Anlass zur Wahl geworden. (2)

(1) and (2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.61

An examination of the construction of Hotel Savoy will show that the details of the narrative cannot be dismissed as unnecessary or as the products of chance.

In the opening page of the novel Gabriel Dan presents himself to the reader as engaged in a journey which he has temporarily interrupted:

Ich war entschlossen, ein paar Tage oder eine Woche auszuruhen... Ich kehre aus dreijähriger Kriegsgefangenschaft zurück, habe in einem sibirischen Lager gelebt und bin durch russische Dörfer und Städte gewandert, als Arbeiter, Tagelöhner, Nachtwächter, Kofferträger, und Bäckergehilfe. (H.S.I.131)

Yet the use of the present tense (kehre) undermines Dan's account of his life as systematic progression. The present tense marks the severing of Dan's development from the carefully constructed world of narrative history. Dan's experiences represent a simultaneous present, a loosening of all existential roots, of all links with the past. This impression is reinforced by Dan's expression of his delight in shedding his former identity:

Ich freue mich, wieder ein altes Leben abzustreifen, wie so oft in diesen Jahren. (H.S.I.131)

Dan effects a disjunction from his own history by making it an object of his attention:

Ich sehe den Soldaten, den Mörder, den fast Gemordeten, den Auferstandenen, den Gefesselten, den Wanderer. (H.S.I.131)

Dan's long stay at the Hotel Savoy denies the initial impulse of the journey to the West, which then functions within the novel as a metaphor for the contradictions inherent in the values, ideas and beliefs of contemporary society. The interruption of the journey entails the

suspension of progression, which is re-formulated by Dan in his description of the cessation of personal development:

So vieles kann man in sich saugen und dennoch unverändert an Körper, Gang und Gehaben bleiben. Aus Millionen Gefäßen schlürfen, niemals satt sein, wie ein Regenbogen in allen Farben schillern, dennoch immer ein Regenbogen sein, von der gleichen Farbenskala. (H.S.I.132)

Dan lives his life unaware of historical progression, as if in some kind of ritualistic myth. The experience of existence in its simultaneity, a state which was described by Franz Tunda as "eine ganz bestimmte Vorläufigkeit, die kein Ende hat" (F.E.I.355), entails the paralysis of all action, as action can only unfold in time. As Dan has rejected the idea of history, he is incapable of working with others to make their common history. He confesses to Zwonimir:

Und erkläre Zwonimir, daß ich ein einzelner bin und kein Gefühl für die Gemeinschaft habe. "Ich bin ein Egoist", sage ich, "ein wirklicher Egoist". (H.S.I.175)

His world is self-referential and he commits himself to the role of passive observer. The ideas and beliefs which Gabriel Dan and Paul Bernheim in Rechts und Links represent curve back upon themselves. Unless some important event effects a clean break, thus bringing into being a contradiction, Gabriel Dan and the occupants of the Hotel Savoy continue to travel along the path dictated by the prevailing ideas and beliefs of contemporary society. By refusing to confront the present, they refuse history and move across the wider basis of their present ideas and beliefs "in einer ganz bestimmten Vorläufigkeit, die kein Ende hat". (F.E.I.355). Dan's interrupted journey becomes

a metaphor for his inability to move beyond the rigid boundaries of his own ideas and beliefs. Dan's rejection of the progression of history is reflected in the expressive medium through which he makes his thoughts known to the reader. The present tense represents a simultaneous present which outruns the flow of history as it is presented by the narrative tense. By alternating between the present tense and the simple narrative tense, Roth undermines our conception of "reality" as a single series of acts which unfold in the context of objective historical time. The opening of these "branch lines of time", described so evocatively by Bruno Schulz in the passage with which this chapter opens, more accurately charts the movements of history at a particularly difficult and disturbed period. Roth re-presents through his tense usage the state of equilibrium of a representative society which has dealt with the problem of scarcity by living outside the realm of history, as if in ritualistic myth. The very structure of the Hotel Savoy represents the carefully balanced organizational framework which prevails in contemporary society. Initially each floor of the Hotel Savoy seems remarkably similar to the outsider Gabriel Dan:

Das fünfte Stockwerk sieht genauso wie das sechste aus, man kann sich leicht irren;... (H.S.I.134)

The finer gradations of scarcity do however become apparent:

Über den Quadersteinen des dritten Stockwerks liegen dunkelrote, grünesäumte Teppiche, man hört seinen Schritt nicht mehr. (H.S.I.134)

It is easy to distinguish between rich and poor occupants:

Hier wohnen die Reichen,... (H.S.I.134)

It is only as Dan becomes more involved with the other occupants of the Hotel Savoy that he realizes the full implications of the subtle gradations which obtain between the different floors of the hotel:

Mir gefiel das Hotel nicht mehr: die Waschküche nicht, an der die Menschen erstickten, der grausam wohlwollende Liftknabe nicht, die drei Stockwerke Gefangener. Wie die Welt war dieses Hotel Savoy, mächtigen Glanz strahlte es nach außen, Pracht sprühte aus sieben Stockwerken, aber Armut wohnte drin in Gottesnähe, was oben stand, lag unten, begraben in luftigen Gräbern, und die Gräber schichteten sich auf den behaglichen Zimmern der Satten, die unten saßen, in Ruhe und Wohligkeit... (H.S.I.150)

In this microcosm of contemporary social relations it becomes clear that for the prisoners in the upper three floors there is no margin of freedom as long as wealth is not more evenly distributed. Dan sees himself confronted by the fact that the condition of scarcity forces upon humanity the realization that it is impossible for all human beings to co-exist on equal terms. Yet Roth does not restrict his attention to those categories which are empirically perceptible in his reconstruction of contemporary society. He sees that a society characterizes itself not only by what it presents openly for inspection, but also through what it suppresses, through its gaps and absences. As the true nature of the economic relations which produced the social inequalities is concealed in their phenomenal presence, so the true nature of the manipulator of social relations in the Hotel Savoy, Kaleguropulos, is also concealed.

The contemporary social relations which Roth encapsulates in the curious hierarchal structure of the Hotel Savoy

are in complete opposition to his own values. In the essay "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths" (see above page 50, note 1) as elsewhere (1), Claudio Magris sees Roth's own values as residing firmly within the absolute hierarchy of values embodied in the Torah:

Die Perspektive von Roth ist immer eine religiöse Perspektive, die den Zerfall der Werte am Maßstab der religiösen Werte, der Thora, beurteilt... Die neue herrschende Klasse, die bürgerliche, hat die Tradition aufgelöst; aus Willen zur Macht hat sie die Werte reduziert:...er sieht die Mängel der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft mit der Klarheit eines Linksradikalen, doch auch die Revolution ist ein Gesicht der Säkularisation, des horizontalen Verfalls, wie er sagt. (2)

What Roth considers the complete reversal of true values is incorporated into the very form of expression.

...was oben stand, lag unten, begraben in luftigen Gräbern,... (H.S.I. 150)

As Gabriel Dan comes to identify himself with the fate of the poorer occupants of the Hotel Savoy, he expresses his new-found solidarity in a way which expresses the contradictions inherent in the forms of organization which prevail in the Hotel Savoy:

Ich gehöre zu den hoch Begrabenen... Wie hoch kann man noch fallen? In den Himmel, in endliche Seligkeit? (H.S.I.150)

In Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (see above note 1), Claudio Magris asserts that East European Jewry, having abandoned the trans-historical absolute values of

(1) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums, (trans. J.Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974

(2) Claudio Magris, ~~op.cit.~~ p. (Die verschollenen Annalen? p 64.)

the shtetl communities, immediately takes up its position in the forward march of history:

Die Flucht aus dem Shtetl bedeutet Austritt aus dem Judentum, das heißt aus einer Welt der transzendenten und transindividuellen Werte, und Eintritt in die Geschichte: (1)

Yet it is precisely the loss of supra-individual values and the journey of the East European Jewish "Heimkehrer" "ins schwindelerregende Chaos, dessen einziges Gesetz der Erfolg des einzelnen ist." (2) that makes the representative figure, Gabriel Dan incapable of experiencing any real community with his fellows and of working with them to make their common history. As we saw earlier, Dan describes his own existence in terms of the breadth of the rainbow spectrum:

So vieles kann man in sich saugen und dennoch unverändert an Körper, Gang und Gehaben bleiben. Aus Millionen Gefäßen schlürfen, niemals satt sein, wie ein Regenbogen in allen Farben schillern, dennoch immer ein Regenbogen sein, von der gleichen Farbenskala. (H.S.I.132)

The lack of any communal bonds leads Dan to view his own existence as fixed and unchanging. He merely registers the changes taking place around him and, although he is receptive to his environment, he is unwilling or unable to employ these new ideas as forces for change and development.

The theme of the journey becomes the symbolic expression of the exclusion of the East European Jew from the traditional "Vertikale Werte" and his unsatisfactory existence

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.32

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.33

on "die horizontale Ebene" (1). Magris notes the unwelcome concomitants of the abandonment of traditional Jewish values:

Die Einfügung in die horizontale Ebene...wird nicht als Potenzierung des von allen Zwängen befreiten Individuums empfunden, sondern als Schwächung und Zersetzung des aus einem Zusammenhang gerissenen und in seiner Person selbst bedrohten einzelnen, der nun der Einsamkeit, der Verdinglichung zur bloßen Ware und sogar der Vernichtung ausgesetzt ist. (2)

Because of the nature of the relationships which obtain between them, the inhabitants of the Hotel Savoy remain isolated from one another and are unable to work together to change their condition. Abel Glanz's transactions distance him from the rest of the Jewish community, and Hirsch Fisch is only drawn into relationships with other people when he is able to sell them tea or a lottery ticket. Not only are the poorer occupants in opposition to the network of industrialists represented by Neuner and Böhlaug, they are also divided amongst themselves. Their history is negatively constituted: it can be expressed as a failure to coalesce and progress as a connected whole. Magris sets Santschin's appearance as a variety performer within the context of Jewish literature:

In Hotel Savoy ist die Welt ein Zirkus...und sie ist die Geschichte, "Der Weltgeschichte Strom" (wie... der jüdisch-wienerische Dichter Ludwig August Frankl geschrieben hatte), welcher das Individuum auf den Stand der gebrechlichen und marionettenhaften Unsicherheit eines Jongleurs oder eines Spaßmachers auf dem Seil heruntergebracht hat. (3)

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p. 34

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p. 34

(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p. 50

Yet Santschin's role as a clown has another function within the framework of the novel. At a point in history where it is even harder than usual to distinguish the pattern of developments the characters create for themselves a more harmonious autonomous realm which transcends the measured flow of chronological time: life is lived as if in ritualistic myth outside history. Roth works the reification, which for Magris was so characteristic of the social relations in the Hotel Savoy, into the narrative perspective. In the opening paragraphs of the novel, Gabriel Dan at once establishes his identity as narrator and reifies himself within the context of the fiction by describing his external appearance:

Ich trage eine russische Bluse, die mir jemand geschenkt hat, eine kurze Hose, die ich von einem verstorbenen Kameraden geerbt habe, und Stiefel, immer noch brauchbare, an deren Herkunft ich mich selbst nicht mehr erinnere. (H.S.I.131)

The function of the variation of narrative perspective which Magris sees as characteristic of Roth's narrative technique in Hotel Savoy is, however, different from what Magris argues in his essay "Die verschollenen Annalen".

Der allwissende Erzähler verschwindet, an seine Stelle tritt -ein genau abgegrenzter Standpunkt, der auf jede organische Gesamtschau der Wirklichkeit verzichtet, die durch die ständige Verschiebung der Perspektive aus den Fugen geraten und zerbrochen ist wie das Chaos der Nachkriegszeit in den Augen des Gabriel Dan,... (1)

By displaying Gabriel Dan as chronicler of the chaos of the immediate post-war period, and by reifying him within the context of the fiction by including his self description, Roth illustrates that the abandonment of the

(1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen", op.cit.p.60

"vertical dimension" of Judaism does not result in the homecomer's easy integration into the flow of history, but rather in the rejection of the very idea of any ordered progression of events: Gabriel Dan lives in a state of timeless suspension - he has effected the crucial disjunction from his own history by making it the object of his attention.

Roth once again uses the motif of the breakdown of the measured flow of chronological time to undermine the conception of the clear line of historical development. In the Hotel Savoy, which becomes the symbolic centre of the gradual erosion of the traditional hierarchal values of the shtetl (1), the occupants are manipulated by imperceptible secular forces and deprived of the possibility of creating a new synthesis which could bring about changes in their world. On his arrival in the Hotel Savoy, Dan notices the curious discrepancy between the times shown on the clock faces on the different floors of the hotel:

Das fünfte Stockwerk sieht genauso wie das sechste aus, man kann sich leicht irren; dort oben und hier hängt eine Normaluhr gegenüber der Treppe, nur gehen die beiden Uhren nicht regelmäßig. Die im sechsten Stockwerk zeigt sieben Uhr und zehn Minuten, hier ist

(1) Although the shtetl communities had been in decline since the mid 19th century, the traditional values which they embodied continued to be of considerable importance to Roth until the end of his life. For an examination of the cultural values of the shtetl, see Mark Zbrowski and Elisabeth Herzog. Life is with People. The Jewish Little-Town of Eastern Europe, International Universities Press Inc., New York, 1955.

es sieben Uhr und im vierten Stock sind es zehn Minuten weniger. (H.S.I.134)

The inhabitants of the lower floors are sheltered from the exigencies which stamp the lives of the occupants of the top four floors: the rich live in an autonomous world which has its own laws of time which are in harmony with their more leisurely existence:

...Kaleguropulos, der Schlaue, läßt absichtlich die Uhren zurückgehn, weil die Reichen Zeit haben. (H.S.I.134)

The curious temporal equilibrium which has been established in the Hotel Savoy to work against the forces of history is disrupted by the arrival of Zwonimir Pansin, a former "Kriegskamerad" of Gabriel Dan. Zwonimir has internalized the a-temporal values of the shtetl: recently arrived from the East, he still has a conception of an integral world order which is not at odds with his own existence. He inhabits a realm which cannot merely be reduced to a set of related and orientated actions, encapsulated and expressed in the flow of chronological time. For Musil too, obsessive regard for the flow of chronological time was a clear indication that the individual was not well integrated into the world around him. The mirror

sei zu einem Instrument der Angst geworden, wie die Uhr, die ein Ersatz dafür ist, daß unsere Tätigkeiten sich nicht mehr natürlich ablösen. (1)

Gabriel Dan describes his friend Zwonimir in the following terms:

Er hat eine gesunde Konstitution, geht spät schlafen und erwacht mit dem Morgenwind. Bauernblut rollt in seinem Körper, er besitzt keine Uhr und weiß immer

(1) Robert Musil. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg, 1956, p.182

die Stunde genau,... (H.S.I.177)

...Niemand entging dem Hotel Savoy. Ich warnte Zwonimir, aber er glaubte nicht. Er war gesund bis zur Gottlosigkeit, und er kannte keine Macht außer seiner eigenen. "Das Hotel Savoy ist mir verfallen, Bruder", sagte er. (H.S.I.182)

Dan's meeting with Zwonimir leads him to re-assess his relationship with the other occupants of the Hotel Savoy. For the first time he articulates his feelings of community with the poorer inhabitants of the sixth and seventh floors:

Ich lebe in Gemeinschaft mit den Bewohnern des Hotels Savoy. ...Nicht mit Böhlaug, aber mit dem toten Sant-schin, der im Wäshedunst erstickt ist, und mit Stasia mit den vielen vom fünften, sechsten und siebenten Stock,...

Gewiß, ich lebe in einer Gemeinschaft, ihr Leid ist mein Leid, ihre Armut ist meine Armut. (H.S.I.176)

Working with Zwonimir at the station, Gabriel Dan experiences for the first time a new oneness of interests with his fellow workers:

Wir waren alle vierzehn wie ein einziger Mann. Alle waren wir gleichzeitig da, alle gingen wir gleichzeitig essen, alle hatten wir dieselben Bewegungen, und die Hopfenballen waren unser gemeinsamer Feind. (H.S.I.183)

Zwonimir's arrival in the Hotel Savoy brings out the contradiction of Dan's role as neutral observer of life in the microcosm of contemporary Western society. It is because of the absence of any strong bond between the individual and society that Dan is able to stay on at the Hotel Savoy in the first place:

...könnte ich in dieser interessanten Stadt bleiben, noch ein bißchen ausruhen. Ich habe keine Eile. Keine Mutter, kein Weib, kein Kind. Niemand erwartet mich. Niemand sehnt sich nach mir. (my emphasis) (H.S.I.169)

Zwonimir's unexpected arrival disrupts the state of timeless suspension into which Dan has retreated as a neutral

observer. It is Dan's attempt to surpass the contradictions inherent in his position, and to create a new synthesis which will effectively change the lives of those around him, that makes any positive development possible. Dan's close friendship with Zwonimir and his new-found feeling of community with the poorer inhabitants of the Hotel Savoy implies a diversification of narrative perspective within the convention of the "Ich-Erzähler". In a passage quoted above, Claudio Magris characterized the narrative perspective of the earlier novels (those written before Hiob, 1930) as follows:

Der allwissende Erzähler verschwindet, an seine Stelle tritt - ...ein genau abgegrenzter Standpunkt, der auf jede organische Gesamtschau der Wirklichkeit verzichtet,... (1)

It is on the basis of this observation that Magris draws the distinction between the early phase of Roth's work and the later "Epic" period.

As Gabriel Dan begins to identify more with the fate of the occupants of the Hotel Savoy, he is able to articulate fully the circumstances of their existence for the first time. As the secretary of Bloomfield, the East European Jew who has retained his integrity in the face of the influence of the epitome of Western values, America, Dan sees and registers the full extent of the misery of the occupants of the Hotel Savoy and the inhabitants of the town:

Es ging ihnen schlecht, den Menschen. Das Schicksal bereiteten sie sich selbst und glaubten, es käme von Gott. Sie waren gefangen in Überlieferungen, ihr Herz

(1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen", op.cit. p.60

hing an tausend Fäden, und ihre Hände spannen sich selbst die Fäden... Ich saß im Vorhof des lieben Gottes Henry Bloomfield und registrierte Gebete und Wünsche seiner kleinen Menschen. (H.S.I.202)

Before the arrival of Zwonimir, the fate of the Jews on the path westwards was expressed metaphorically. Their condition was expressed negatively, in terms of its fundamental absences: the full reality of their situation was not articulated:

Wie stumme Schatten gehen die Menschen aneinander vorbei, es ist eine Versammlung von Gespensstern, längst Verstorbene wandeln hier. Seit tausend Jahren wandert dieses Volk in engen Gassen. (my emphasis) (H.S.I.153)

As we have seen, it is through increased involvement with the community in which he finds himself that Gabriel Dan is able to give full expression to the situation of the inhabitants of the hotel. Yet by giving clear expression to the fate of the occupants of the Hotel Savoy, Dan sets himself beyond their community of interests. Within the framework of the "Ich-Erzähler" Dan's position is analogous to the role adopted by the aristocratic Eduard P. in Zipper und sein Vater, of whom Claudio Magris writes:

Als genialer, unbeteiligter Zuschauer nimmt er gegenüber der Wirklichkeit "von außen her" Stellung... Für Roth ist die aristokratische Stellung gleichbedeutend mit jenem archimedischen Punkt außerhalb der Wirklichkeit, von dem später Adorno ⁺) gesprochen hat und der dem Autor als einzige Möglichkeit erscheint, den Lauf der Ereignisse zu verstehen. (+) T.W. Adorno: Minima Moralia, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, p.334) (1)

As Dan becomes progressively more involved with the poorer inhabitants of the town in shaping their own history, the spurious naturalness of the "Ich-Form" is abandoned as

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.65

Roth gradually gives Dan access to the third person, the position of outside observer. At a critical point in his own history, and in the history of the community of the "Heimkehrer", Dan effects a critical disjunction from the course of events by reifying them in detailed description; the dimension of the third person narrator within the "Ich-Form"

(extracts) from a personal world made up of humours and tendencies, a form which is pure, significant, and which therefore vanishes as soon as it is born thanks to the totally conventional and ethereal decor of the third person. (1)

At this point it is interesting to note how Roth describes Eduard P. in the closing pages of Zipper und sein Vater:

Er wandelt...an den Rändern der Ereignisse. Er säumte sie ein gewissermaßen. Von außen her und als gehörte er nicht zu dieser Welt, nahm er Stellung zu ihr und ihren Vorgängen. (my emphasis) (Z.I.520)

The revolution instigated by Zwonimir to alter the fate of the "Heimkehrer" is brutally put down. Dan describes the scene as it unfolds before him:

Ein Kommandoruf löst die festgefügte Masse, Doppelreihen lockern sich, die Soldaten stehen da wie ein schütterer Wald in großen Abständen auf dem Ringplatz. Sie umringen den ganzen Häuserblock, die Menge ist im Hotel und in der engen Straße eingeschlossen. Zwonimir sah ich nicht mehr. (H.S.I.223)

As the inevitable destiny of the "Heimkehrer" on the path westward is destruction,

man and author little by little win the right to the third person, in proportion as existence becomes fate. (2)

(1) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero, (trans. A.Lavers and C. Smith) Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.43

(2) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.42

This diversification of narrative perspectives within the context of the "Ich-Erzähler" form leads us to challenge Magris' assertion that there are important structural differences between the novels of the early period and those after Zipper und sein Vater, which Magris characterizes as

Wiederentdeckung der geschlossenen Form und des alten klassischen Aufbaus. (1)

An examination of what Magris terms

den einzigen unparteiischen perspektivischen Winkel...
den einzigen epischen Standpunkt,... (2)

in Zipper und sein Vater will show that the twist which characterizes the narrative perspective in the closing pages of the novel is incorporated into the "Ich-Erzähler" perspective at the end of Hotel Savoy. Magris characterizes Eduard P.'s function in the closing pages of Zipper und sein Vater as follows:

Da die Aristokratie untergegangen und verschwunden ist, bleibt sie von jedem dialektischen Kampf um die Macht ausgeschlossen, abseits vom Streit, und ist unfähig, auf die Wirklichkeit irgendwelchen Einfluß zu haben. (3)

Dan's encounter with Henry Bloomfield, who has preserved the a-historical values of the shtetl, also sets him outside "jedem dialektischen Kampf um die Macht...abseits vom Streit,..." (see above note 3). Dan comments on the morning after Bloomfield's long awaited arrival:

Die Aufregung hat sich meiner wie aller andern bemächtigt, hat meinen Blick geschärft für tausend kleine Veränderungen, so daß ich sie wie durch ein Fernrohr sehe mit mächtig geschwellenen Dimensionen. (H.S.I.194)

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.64

(2) and (3)

Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.65

The image of the "Fernrohr" conveys Dan's distanced attitude to events in the Hotel Savoy.

In Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums, Magris shows that the distanced standpoint in the tradition of Jewish writing was conveyed through the image of a view from a window:

...ist der Platz Itke K.s - der jüdisch-amerikanischen Protagonistin eines Romans von Jeannette Lander - am "Fenster", der Ort, von dem aus man das betrachtet, an dem man nicht teilnimmt. (1)

The same motif occurs in the closing pages of Hotel Savoy to illustrate Dan's detachment from the events which unfold before him.

Den Hof liebe ich, in den das Fenster meines Zimmers hinausgeht. Er erinnert mich an den ersten Tag im Hotel, den Tag meiner Ankunft... Unrast ist im ganzen Hotel,... Wenn ich zum Fenster hinausblicke, sehe ich ein Stück glücklich geretteter Ruhe. Die Hühner schreien. Nur die Hühner,... Mein Hof aber war so, als gehöre er gar nicht zum Hotel Savoy. (H.S.I.215)

In an early feuilleton "Menschen am Sonntag" (2) Roth also conveys the onlooker's compassionate detachment by describing his view of the world from behind the screen of the window:

Am Sonntag stähe ich am Fenster.

The fusion of the two narrative perspectives, the "epic", the detached view from the outside, and the empathetic view from the inside, becomes apparent when Dan describes his reactions to the "Heimkehrer" moving westwards:

Wir stehn seitwärts und betrachten sie, aber es ist genauso, als ob wir mit ihnen gingen. Wir sind wie

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- (1) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (trans.J.Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, p.92
- (2) Joseph Roth. "Menschen am Sonntag", Berliner Börsen-Courier, 3.7.1921, vol.IV., pp.796-798

sie, auch uns hat Rußland ausgeschüttet, und wir ziehn alle heim. (H.S.I.217)

Roth re-asserts "jenen archimedischen Punkt außerhalb der Wirklichkeit,..." (see above page 70, note 1) which for Magris indicated a return to the closed form of the epic, by deepening the temporal perspectives, by relating the present to the past. Dan re-constructs the course of his thwarted relationship with Stasia from the perspective of the present:

Ich verstand damals nicht - ich war lange einsam gewesen und ohne Frauen -, weshalb die Mädchen so heimlich tun... (H.S.I.212)

Nun weiß ich, daß die Frauen alles ahnen, was in uns vorgeht,... Heute weiß ich, daß die Begleitung des Polizeioffiziers ein Zufall war, ihre Frage gelegentlich ein Geständnis. (H.S.I.213) (my emphasis)

What Magris describes as "die allgemeine Unwirklichkeit und Ungewißheit des flukturierenden Kontextes" (1) of Hotel Savoy re-affirms the dialectic of form and content. Outside the realm of traditional a-historical Jewish values, all attempts to surpass contradictions and to create a new synthesis which could change the world must fail. Ignatz, the mysterious "Liftboy" who turns out to be Kaleguropulos, the owner of the hotel, "war wie ein lebendiges Gesetz dieses Hauses, Tod und Liftknabe". (H.S.I.164) (my emphasis). Like the endless journey of the homecomers, the "lebendiges Gesetz" does not reach any ultimate threshold of articulation, which would allow it to transcend old forms and to advance history: it merely relates back to itself, blocking any real impetus

(1) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo, op.cit. p.48

for change. Henry Bloomfield's journey describes an arc which leads him inexorably back to his starting point: his annual journey to his father's grave becomes a metaphor for his inability to pass beyond the self-referential framework of the ideas and beliefs which characterize existence outside the a-temporal realm of the values of the shtetl. Dan, who witnesses Bloomfield's private pilgrimage to the graveyard where his father is buried, remarks:

"Das Leben hängt so sichtbar mit dem Tod zusammen und der Lebendige mit seinen Toten. Es ist kein Ende da, kein Abbruch - immer Fortsetzung und Anknüpfung." (H.S.I.209)

The articulation of the synchronic process of conflict and resolution, - "Fortsetzung und Anknüpfung" - from within the novel implies a diversification of narrative perspectives. The clear opposition posited by Magris between the "allwissender Erzähler" of the "Epik", and "den genau abgegrenzten Standpunkt, der auf jede organische Gesamtschau der Wirklichkeit verzichtet,..." (1), is thus seen to be spurious.

By consciously relating the present to the past, Roth illustrates that outside the values of the shtetl it is impossible to pass beyond the frontiers of contemporary ideas and beliefs: these beliefs curve back upon themselves because what is beyond them cannot be explored - it is as illusionary as Zwonimir's conception of "Amerika". The circle of the dialectical relationship between form

(1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen", op.cit. p.60

and content is completed as the final words of the novel point outwards towards a realm which cannot be explored. The conclusion of the novel consists of the statement that there can be no conclusion:

"Amerika, denke ich, hätte Zwonimir gesagt,
nur Amerika." (H.S.I.224)

To a similar question Kafka's horseman replied that the goal was that there was no goal:

"Wohin reitest du, Herr?"

"Ich weiß es nicht", sagte ich, "nur weg von hier,
nur weg von hier. Immerfort weg von hier, nur so
kann ich mein Ziel erreichen."

"Du kennst also dein Ziel?" fragte er.

"Ja", antwortete ich, "ich sagte es doch: 'Weg-von-
hier', das ist mein Ziel." (1)

(1) Franz Kafka. Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß, (ed. Max Brod), S.Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1953, pp.389-390

Chapter III.

Die Rebellion

We now understand what is profitable and what is intolerable in the preterite as used in the Novel: it is a lie made manifest, it delineates an area of plausibility which reveals the possible in the very act of unmasking it as false. (1)

In this chapter we will continue our examination of the shifts in narrative perspective which Roth employs to highlight the operations of the narrative tense. In the opening pages of Die Rebellion Roth establishes himself as an authoritative demiurge, the creator of a world whose contours are clearly etched and expressed with confident certainty. The role of the narrator as an external authority presupposes a world which is elaborated, constructed, and no longer seen as constantly evolving: a world in which, as Bruno Schulz would have it "Ordinary facts are arranged within time, strung along its length as on a thread." (2) Thus the narrative tense, the medium through which Roth expresses Andreas Pum's gradual realization of the gravity of the social deception in Germany after the First World War itself expresses the process through which "Die Lüge zur Weltordnung gemacht wird." (3) The narrative tense links the carriages in the train of events in a way which admits no disorder: the essential confusion of everyday life is reduced to a series of formed, well defined

(1) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero, (trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.38

(2) Bruno Schulz. "The Age of Genius", in: Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass, (trans. Celina Wieniewska), Pan Books, London, 1980, p.14

(3) Franz Kafka. Der Prozess, cit. in: Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums, Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, p.55

acts. Just as Bruno Schulz' ingenuous reader-traveller is oblivious of the operations which govern his passage through the narrative, so Roth's Andreas Pum is unaware of the essential duplicity of the laws which govern his existence. The narrator outlines Pum's conception of government with gentle irony:

Die Regierung ist etwas, das über den Menschen liegt wie der Himmel über der Erde. Was von ihr kommt, kann gut oder böse sein, aber immer ist es groß und übermächtig, unerforscht und unerforschbar, wenn auch manchmal für gewöhnliche Menschen verständlich.
(R.I.227)

According to Roland Barthes, the narrative tense is similarly imposed on the complexity of living presence from above, carefully accommodating "gewöhnliche Menschen" by presenting them with an image of the world which excludes all elements of uncertainty:

Being an image of an order, it is one of those numerous formal pacts made between the writer and society for the justification of the former and the serenity of the latter. (1)

The process of conflict and resolution through which Andreas becomes aware of the gross deception underlying authority is paralleled and highlighted by the process through which Roth exposes the tendency of descriptive narrative to "distribute, divide, and allocate" (2) existence in a way which belies the dynamics of development.

The irony which informs the narrator's view of Andreas Pum also forms the basis of the divergence in narrative

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.38

(2) Bruno Schulz, op.cit. p.14

perspective which undermines what we perceive as the centre of the work, exposing the sprawling unintelligibility of the life concealed behind the mask of a fixed and explicit world.

By incorporating vocabulary signalling Pum's naive reverence of authority into an authoritative narrative perspective, Roth highlights the illusions of someone who believes that a decoration can compensate for the loss of a limb:

Bedachte man es recht, so war der Verlust eines Beines nicht sehr schlimm und das Glück, eine Auszeichnung erhalten zu haben, ein großes. Ein Invalidler durfte auf die Achtung der Welt rechnen. Ein ausgezeichnete Invalidler auf die der Regierung.
(R.I.227)

Claudio Magris indicates the true focus of Roth's irony:

...die Ironie,...richtet sich nicht auf die Person, sondern auf die Diskrepanz zwischen Illusion und Realität, zwischen subjektiver Träumerei und Objektivität. (1)

By broadening the base of his irony to include the unmasking of the narrative tense as the central agent in the reduction of the gradual evolvment of human life into formed and explicit wholes, Roth relates individual experience to the broader social process. Roth gives an effective illustration of the effects of subsuming unintelligible living presence into an elaborately constructed world: the personal becomes radically separated from the social. The inhabitants of the war hospital are totally isolated from the wider social process:

Die Baracken des Kriegsspitals Numero XXIV lagen am Rande der Stadt. Von der Endstation der Straßenbahn

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.55

bis zum Krankenhaus hätte ein Gesunder eine halbe Stunde rüstig wandern müssen. Die Straßenbahn führte in die Welt, in die große Stadt, in das Leben. Aber die Insassen des Kriegsspitals Numero XXIV konnten die Endstation der Straßenbahn nicht erreichen.
(R.I.227)

It is only after Andreas has become more actively engaged in social existence that the learning process begins.

Andreas Pum's weary journeys around the back courts of the city become a metaphor for the gradual evolution of his new relationship to authority, for an experience which is both social and personal, and which is continually evolving.

Through the ironic, authoritative narrative perspective Roth illustrates the limitations of Andreas' horizons and highlights the separation of the social from the personal which results from his view of the government, and of authority in general, as formed and unassailable wholes. Andreas attaches a convenient label to his dissenting fellow-sufferers, and refuses to investigate the social causes for their personal plight:

Das Wort genügte ihm,... Es enthob ihn der Verpflichtung, weiter nachdenken und sich mit der Erforschung der andern abquälen zu müssen. (R.I.228)

Roth describes the Spartacist uprising through Pum's eyes and outlines Andreas' conclusions:

Die heidnischen Spartakisten gaben keine Ruhe. Wahrscheinlich wollten sie die Regierung abschaffen... Sie waren schlecht oder töricht, sie wurden erschossen, es geschah ihnen recht. Gewöhnliche Menschen sollen sich nicht in die Angelegenheiten der Klugen mischen. (R.I.232)

Once again Roth illustrates how the division between the social and the personal remains intact.

We have seen that we cannot take what Magris considers as "illusion" and "reality" in Die Rebellion at face value. Yet Roth does distinguish between Andreas' private illusions (which he relates to the disjunction of the private from the social) and the carefully constructed "hierarchy in the realm of facts" (1), the lies which come to represent objective social order. Andreas' actions are expressed in the present tense - which distinguishes them from the well-defined, carefully constructed world of the narrative tense:

Es ist ein heller Sommernachmittag. Andreas steht im Hof eines großen Hauses, im Schatten eines alten, breiten Baumes. Es mag eine Linde sein. Andreas dreht die Kurbel seines Kastens und spielt: "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden". (R.I.233)

Yet Roth makes it clear that Andreas' dreams do not mark the resumption of personal responsibility, and the acknowledgement that his life is at odds with the closed, explicit substantial acts that constitute "reality". By outlining Andreas' self-description Roth reifies Pum's consciousness, translating it from a continually evolving process into a fixed and finite form. As we saw in the chapters on Hotel Savoy and Das Spinnennetz, Roth illustrates the bifurcation of the totality of the social and the personal in the image of the central character looking at his own life, making an object of what is a continuous process. Andreas Pum effects this crucial disjunction from his life as process: he lives his life in a state of timeless suspension, in ritualistic myth. The narrator's

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

identification with Andreas' illusions is ironic: by expressing his sense of community with Andreas through the use of "wir" the narrator in fact highlights Pum's individual illusions:

Mit der Lizenz in der Tasche wandelt der Mensch sicher durch die Straßen dieser Welt, in denen die Polizisten lauern. Man scheut keine Gefahr, ja, man kennt keine. Die Anzeige des brotneidischen, bösen Nachbarn brauchen wir nicht zu beachten. Auf einer Postkarte teilen wir der Behörde mit, worum es sich handelt. (R.I.235)

Roth illustrates Pum's susceptibility to the deception which prevails in contemporary society by describing how he comes to believe in the reality of the scene depicted on his barrel organ:

Es war kein Zweifel, daß dieses Bild eine Verzauberung menschlicher Wesen durch ein böses Weib darstellen sollte. Andreas hatte niemals an die Möglichkeit solcher Ereignisse in der wirklichen Welt gedacht. Weil er aber das Bildnis häufig betrachten mußte, wurde es ihm vertraut und glaubhaft... (R.I.237)

Roth prepares the reader for the dual impulse of tragedy and comedy, the two "branch lines" which form the basis of the novel, by temporarily abandoning his authoritative narrative stance and presenting alternative explanations for the good fortune which follows Andreas' meeting with Frau Blumich:

An diesem Tage hatte Andreas Pum soviel Glück wie noch nie,... Sei es, weil die ungewöhnlich heiße Stunde alle Leute zwang, ihre Fenster weit offen zu halten,...sei es, weil ihnen der frischrasierte, saubere und mit einem glänzenden Kreuz gezierte Andreas ganz besonders sympathisch erschien - wir wissen nicht, wieso es kam, daß es rings um Andreas Geld regnete... (R.I.245)

The absence of any authoritative interpretation from the narrator prepares the reader for Andreas' chance encounter

with Herr Arnold, an encounter which is to change the direction of his life:

Mit dieser Verachtung im Herzen hätte Andreas Pum... leben können,... - wenn nicht ein ganz fremder Mann in Andreas Pums Leben getreten wäre, um es zu vernichten, nicht mit dem Willen zum Bösessein, sondern von der Blindheit des Zufalls dazu gezwungen,... (R.I.254)

By describing Herr Arnold's life in detail in chapter VII, Roth illustrates the extent to which his opinions are similar to Andreas': both men are out of sympathy with contemporary developments. The authoritative narrator writes of Herr Arnold:

Dennoch litt Herr Arnold an einer chronischen und, wie man sieht, unbegründeten Unzufriedenheit. Er selbst wußte freilich Gründe genug. Einerseits regten ihn die Zeitverhältnisse auf. (R.I.255)

Writing from the perspective of Herr Arnold, the narrator attributes the blame for his indiscretion, and the difficulties caused by the intervention of Bernotat, to contemporary conditions:

...so war doch vieles von dem, was den besonderen Fall Bernotat, Lenz und Arnold betraf, eine Schuld dieser Zeit; dieser entsetzlichen Gegenwart, deren Tendenzen dahin gingen, diverse Ordnungen zu zerstören. (R.I.260)

The change of narrative focus from Andreas Pum's life to Herr Arnold's and the apparent lack of connexion between the two lives is justified by the narrator's articulation of the importance of coincidence:

So aber richtet es ein tückisches Geschick ein: daß wir zugrunde gehen, nicht durch unsere Schuld und ohne daß wir einen Zusammenhang ahnen; durch das blinde Wüten eines fremden Mannes,... Er gerade ist nun das Instrument in der vernichtenden Hand des Schicksals. (R.I.262)

As we saw in the chapter on Hotel Savoy it is through the fragmented structure of the novel that Roth conveys the social chaos of the post war period. It is precisely because of the absence of any social links between Andreas Pum and Herr Arnold that the narrator is able to describe the distribution of power in contemporary society which we glimpse from the conflict between the two men:

Gleichzeitig erinnerte er sich an das Unglück eines Kollegen, der einen Herrn in der Bahn grob behandelt und infolgedessen seinen Posten verloren hatte. Der Herr war nämlich ein Magistratsbeamter gewesen. Alle diese Erwägungen veranlaßten den Schaffner, Andreas Pum um eine Legitimation zu fragen. (R.I.265)

The incident in the tram rocks the foundations of Andreas' new life - the encounter robs him of his wife and his livelihood at a stroke. Roth conveys the erosion of Pum's secure, narrow existence by using the image of the vast expanse of sky as a symbol for Pum's widening horizons:

Draußen schien sich die Welt zu weiten. Man sah durch die Ritze ein schmales Stückchen Himmel. Aber es gab eine deutliche Vorstellung von seiner Unendlichkeit. (R.I.271)

For the first time the narrator formulates Andreas' questions as to the certainty of the existence of God, of the divine authority invested in the government:

Wohnte Gott hinter den Sternen? Sah er den Jammer eines Menschen und rührte sich nicht? Was ging hinter dem eisigen Blau vor? Thronte ein Tyrann über der Welt, und seine Ungerechtigkeit war unermesslich wie sein Himmel? (R.I.271)

Yet Andreas' doubts are of short duration. The existence of God, like the legitimacy of secular authority, is beyond doubt. From Andreas' perspective the narrator re-affirms the feelings he shares with Herr Arnold, and

expresses Andreas' faith in the power of state justice to set his life to rights:

Sie sollen ihn nur vor Gericht bringen... Hier wird er seinen Lebenslauf erzählen, seine Kriegsteilnahme,... Er wird die Lizenz wiederbekommen. (R.I.273)

Ach! laßt uns nur vor Gericht kommen... Die Gerechtigkeit leuchtet über den Sälen der Gerichtshöfe. Weise, noble Männer in Talaren sehen mit klugem Blick in das Innere des Menschen und sondern mit bedächtigen Händen die Spreu vom Weizen. (R.I.273)

It falls to the authoritative narrator to highlight the naiveté of Andreas' faith in the workings of the law. Through the statements of the narrator who is an external authority, in possession of knowledge unavailable to Pum, Roth illustrates the extent to which the personal has become separated from the social in Andreas' view of the world. The narrator makes it clear that Pum is unable to relate his problems to the broader social process:

Hätte Andreas eine Ahnung von der Jurisprudenz gehabt, so hätte er gewußt, das die Gerichte sich bereits mit ihm beschäftigten... Schon hatten die großen, rollenden Räder des Staates den Bürger Andreas Pum in die Arbeit genommen, und ohne daß er es noch wußte, wurde er langsam und gründlich zermahlen. (R.I.274)

In her essay Eine stille Entwicklung. Gedanken zum Roman "Die Rebellion" (1), Ingeborg Sültemeyer indicates the differences in Andreas Pum's attitude to God and to the government in the early part of the novel:

In der Gegenüberstellung von Pums Gedanken über Gott und die Regierung macht der Erzähler deutlich, daß Pums Verhältnis zur Wirklichkeit, zur Regierung ein

(1) Ingeborg Sültemeyer. "Eine stille Entwicklung. Gedanken zum Roman "Die Rebellion", in: David Bronsen, (ed) Joseph Roth und die Tradition. Agora Verlag, Darmstadt, 1975, pp.258-276

gläubiges ist, aber das zu Gott ein kalkulierendes. (1)
Sültemeyer then illustrates how this reversal of our conventional expectations of appropriate loyalty is made apparent through the language used to describe God and government:

Von Gott heißt es: "Dieser verteilte (...) nach Verdienst." ... Das Wesen der Regierung wird jedoch mit Begriffen umschrieben, die Gott zukommen müßten: "groß und übermächtig, unerforscht und unerforschbar". (2)

After Pum's unfortunate encounter with Herr Arnold Sültemeyer argues:

Seine Vorstellungen vom Staat, von den Zusammenhängen und Hintergründen politischer Verhältnisse haben sich geändert; sie sind ernüchtert worden. Andreas Pum denkt über sie nicht mehr in metaphysischen Begriffen. (3)

Yet the message of the text would seem to indicate otherwise. After Andreas receives the court summons his conceptions of God and government, previously distinct as Sültemeyer indicates, become conflated.

versuchte er, sich das Gericht vorzustellen, das Kreuz, die Lichter, die Barriere, die Angeklagtenbank,... und das große Bild des Gekreuzigten, zu dem er innerlich schon betete... Er ging in die Kirche...hinüber,... Andreas...sagte...fünf Vaterunser auf. Hierauf fühlte er sich beruhigt, gesichert vor böser Überraschung, vor dem gerichtlichen Urteil, das im Schoße des Morgen lag. (R.I.274-5)

The mysterious ritual surrounding the issue of the court summons makes it more difficult for Andreas to penetrate the arbitrary phenomenal categories that present themselves for

(1) Ingeborg Sültemeyer, op.cit.p.261

(2) op.cit. pp.261-2

(3) op.cit. p.263

his inspection and to come to an understanding of the workings of authority as they are presented to the reader by the distanced narrator. The gradual undermining of what Sültemeyer terms Pum's "rational" relationship to God prepares the reader for Andreas' final confrontation with his own beliefs. Once again the narrator stresses the mysterious workings of the law which remain impenetrable to Andreas Pum:

Er wußte nicht, daß die gut geölten Räder dieser Maschine auch manchmal - und besonders in kleinen Fällen - sich unabhängig voneinander drehten und, jedes für sich, das Opfer zermahlten, das ihnen der Zufall ausgeliefert hatte. (R.I.277)

The disjunction between Andreas' illusions and reality becomes more apparent after his imprisonment. His physical separation from all that was familiar to him becomes a metaphor for his alienation from his former beliefs, from the security that came from his belief in God and his faith in the government:

Über alles, was es (das Auge) gesehen und jemals gespiegelt, breitete sich der Vorhang. (R.I.280)

As we^{shall} see in the section on Zipper und sein Vater, the gradual disintegration of the measured flow of chronological time here also parallels and highlights the disintegration of what Andreas has considered an integral world order. Andreas' disjunction from his past life is encapsulated and expressed in his sense of the irremediable nature of time:

Endgültig verronnen waren die Tage, unauffindbar verschüttet wie große verlorene, auseinandergerollte Perlen. Das Leben kehrte nicht mehr wieder. Es war vertan. Nichts blieb übrig. (R.I.280)

The disintegration of a sense of the logical, ordered progression of events which constituted Andreas' experience of a world which appeared stable and coherent is expressed through the relation of the past to the present:

Ausgelöscht...sind das Spital, der Krieg, die Lizenz,...
Nur in zarten, erlöschenden Umrissen wehten sie durch
die Erinnerung... Er war ein guter Nachtwächter,
Andreas Pum, er hätte es bleiben sollen. (R.I.280-281)

Andreas' view of his own past is framed by the narrator. The effect of this is to represent Andreas viewing himself as a third person. By incorporating Andreas' reflections into the narrator's perspective, Roth effectively undermines

one of those numerous formal pacts made between the writer and society for the justification of the former and the serenity of the latter.
(see above page 78, note 1)

The role of the narrator as an external authority, which presupposes the existence of an elaborately constructed world, is undermined as Pum

little by little wins the right to the third person, in proportion as existence becomes fate,... (1)

By reifying Pum through his own reminiscences Roth effects Andreas' disjunction from his own past, thus establishing an "archimedischen Punkt außerhalb der Wirklichkeit" (2) without recourse to the narrator. Thus we can say of Andreas, as Magris did of Eduard P. in Zipper und sein

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.42

(2) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths", op.cit. p.65

Vater:

Als genialer, unbeteiligter Zuschauer nimmt er gegenüber der Wirklichkeit "von außen her" Stellung. (1)

It was this structural device that Magris took as indicative of Roth's "Wiederentdeckung der geschlossenen Form und des alten klassischen Aufbaus." (2) - a process which he claims started with Zipper und sein Vater in 1928. Yet we have found evidence of this in the earlier novels Hotel Savoy (1924), Das Spinnennetz (1923), and Die Rebellion (1924). As we have seen, Andreas' experiences have robbed him of his confidence - like Eduard P. he is

von jedem dialektischen Kampf um die Nacht ausgeschlossen, abseits vom Streit, und ist unfähig, auf die Wirklichkeit irgendwelchen Einfluß zu haben. (3)

The disintegration of Andreas' faith in what he had considered a stable and coherent order is paralleled and highlighted by the undermining of the "hierarchy in the realm of facts" (4) - the replacement of the narrative tense by the present tense. Roth articulates the process of Andreas' disaffection by juxtaposing the present tense with the past tense, the form which reduces the relationships and institutions in which the characters are still actively involved into fixed, complete and explicit forms. Through the identification of the narrator with Pum, expressed through "wir", Roth relates the experience of

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.65

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.64

(3) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.65

(4) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

the individual to the broader social process and counter-acts the tendency of the narrative tense to divide and allocate human consciousness, thus rendering it fixed and immobile. As we saw in the section on Das Spinnennetz, what is at issue is the articulation of the presence of an individual's social experience, which, as it is still in progress, cannot be expressed in the past tense, which reduces the living presence of human experience to a "closed, well-defined, substantival act". (1) The narrator articulates the presence of Andreas' doubts about the existence of God:

Man kann Gott verlieren. Gott fällt aus dem Kniegelenk. (R.I.282) -

and his continuing discovery of the nature of his social experience:

Und wenn wir auch eine Lizenz haben, so lauern doch die Polizisten in den Winkeln. Wir sind immer gefangen und in der Gewalt des Staates, der Zweibeinigen, der Polizei, der Herren auf den Plattformen der Straßenbahn, der Frauen und der Eselskäufer. (R.I.283)

Andreas' experiences make him re-evaluate what he sees around him, and re-assess his own position:

Als Andreas die Straße betrat, glaubte er, die Welt wäre neu angestrichen und renoviert, und er fühlte sich nicht mehr in ihr zu Hause; wie man fremd ist in einem Zimmer, in das man wiederkehrt, nachdem seine Wände eine neue Farbe erhalten haben. (R.I.284)

The immediacy of Andreas' discovery of the lunacy of commercial developments is expressed through the present tense:

Wie merkwürdig, daß ich jetzt erst die Zusammenhänge

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.38

sehe, denkt Andreas. Aus diesem Wagen breitet sich die Verrücktheit über die Welt... Wie dumm war ich!... Was hätte die Post mit roten Jotazigaretten zu tun? Was geht das die Post an, was die Menschen rauchen? (R.I.284)

As his faith in God has been shaken, Andreas can no longer take refuge in divine authority:

Andreas schickte sein Auge verzweifelt zum Himmel empor, weil er dem Wahnsinn der Erde enttrinnen wollte. Denn der Himmel ist von einer unsterblichen, klaren Bläue, und seine Farbe ist rein wie Gottes Weisheit, und ewige Wolken ziehen über sie hin. Heute aber verbanden sich Wolkenfetzen zu verzerrten Gesichtern, Fratzen wehten über den Himmel, und Gott schnitt Grimassen. (R.I.284)

The six weeks Andreas spends in prison give him time to re-construct his own life, and to re-trace the stages in his personal development which lead him to doubt the authority of the government and of God:

Er entdeckte sich selbst. Er schloß die Augen und freute sich. Wenn er sie öffnete, hatte er ein neues Stück entdeckt, eine Beziehung, einen Klang, einen Tag und ein Bild. Ihm war, als begänne er zu lernen und Geheimnisse täten sich vor ihm auf. So hatte er also fünfundvierzig Jahre in Blindheit gelebt, ohne sich selbst und die Welt zu kennen. (R.I.288)

...Die Regierung war nicht gerecht... So ähnlich handelte Gott: er irrte sich. War Gott noch Gott, wenn er sich irrte? (R.I.289)

The narrator expresses Andreas' new conception of the nature of the government;

Die Regierung...ist nicht mehr etwas Fernes, hoch über uns Befindliches. Sie hat alle irdischen Schwächen und keinen Kontakt mit Gott. (R.I.291-2)

Andreas' isolation during the six weeks of his imprisonment distorts his sense of the passing of time. In order to make sense of the present, he must continually refer to the past:

Jahr um Jahr war er gewohnt, den regelmäßigen Wechsel der Jahreszeiten zu erleben, und seit mehr als dreißig

Jahren hatte auf ihn der erste Regen keinen Eindruck gemacht. Er mußte weit zurückgreifen in die verschollene Jugend. (R.I.293)

What Roth effects by the frequent interjection of Pum's memories is a devaluation of his early experiences in the world, contained as they are within the limits of past, present and future, yet like the rose gardens of childhood in Eliot's Burnt Norton Andreas' memories still have a meaning - but only in as far as they can represent the breaking down of all temporal barriers,

in short a symbol of that aspiration to rebirth as spiritual conquest which finds satisfaction only in the eternal "present" of the mystic, in which all distinctions and oppositions, including those of time, are annulled... (1)

By coming to terms with his memories and re-constructing his past in the light of his new experience Andreas aspires to spiritual rebirth. The ethical purpose of Die Rebellion, the gradual movement of Andreas Pum towards self-realization, is reflected in the expressive medium itself. Andreas is no longer seen from the perspective of an authoritative narrator who expresses his illusions. Andreas Pum himself voices his discoveries in the long monologue in chapter XVI:

Das Herz hält einen langen Schlaf, es tickt und tackt, aber es ist sonst wie tot. Eigene Gedanken dachte mein armer Kopf nicht... Ach! daß ich länger als vier Jahrzehnte leben mußte, um einzusehen, daß ich blind gewesen war im Lichte der Freiheit, und daß ich erst sehen lernte in der Dunkelheit des Kerkers! (R.I.297)

The breaking down of temporal distinctions, the fusing of

(1) Calvano Della Volpe. Critique of Taste (trans.by Michael Caesar), NLB. London, 1978, p.73

past and future is made apparent in Roth's expression of the birth of Andreas Pum's rebellious spirit:

Todgeweiht, blieb er am Leben, um zu rebellieren:
gegen die Welt, die Behörden, gegen die Regierung
und gegen Gott. (R.I.299)

The temporal distinctions become even more blurred as Andreas, now a "Toilettenwärter" in the Café Halali, is unable to distinguish between dream and reality:

Er wußte bald nicht mehr zu unterscheiden zwischen
Wachheit und Traum, und er nahm geträumte Bilder
für wirkliche Ereignisse und diese für Träume.
(R.I.306)

The disintegration of all temporal limits is the vehicle through which Roth expresses Pum's complete alienation from contemporary society:

Schon ragte er hinüber ins andere Leben, während er
noch die Pflastersteine dieser Erde trat. Seine Seele
träumte sich ins Jenseits, wo sie heimisch war. Fremd
kehrte sie in den Tag zurück. (R.I.308)

The blurring of temporal distinctions is continued right to the end of the novel, to the final articulation of Pum's rejection of the ways in which God makes himself known to man, at the point when Pum himself is dying. Deprived of any chance to defend himself, or to present his case at any stage during his trial, Pum has a vision just before he dies of a final confrontation with a supreme court, where his images of secular and divine authority become conflated. In almost biblical language Pum rejects God, without denying his presence:

Ach, ich wollte, ich könnte Dich noch leugnen. Du
aber bist da. Einzig, allmächtig, unerbittlich, die
höchste Instanz, ewig - und es ist keine Hoffnung,
daß Dich Strafe trifft, daß Dich der Tod zu einer
Wolke zerbläst, daß Dein Herz erwacht. Ich will Deine

Gnade nicht! Schick mich in die Hölle! (R.I.312)

The closing lines of Die Rebellion revolve around a dual paradox. Andreas' realization of the ultimate duplicity of both secular and divine authority comes at the end of his life. He becomes aware that his life is not governed by the limits of authority just as he is on the point of renouncing it for ever. The secure order posited by the narrative tense is overturned and the confused and contradictory nature of human life made manifest in the paradox of Andreas' reawakening: faith is expressed in terms of atheism and reality in terms of dream.

Chapter IV.

Die Flucht ohne Ende

Our examination of Roth's Die Flucht ohne Ende will highlight the richness and diversity of the narrative perspectives in the novel. The novel encompasses both the breadth of perspective implied by the "objective" "Bericht"-form and the acuity of the insights we have seen to be characteristic of Roth. And yet the foreword to the novel belies all such diversity. Roth explicitly rejects any attempt at "Dichtung", focussing instead on observed detail:

Im Folgenden erzähle ich die Geschichte meines
Freundes, Kameraden und Gesinnungsgenossen Franz
Tunda.
Ich folge zum Teil seinen Aufzeichnungen, zum Teil
seinen Erzählungen. Ich habe nichts erfunden, nichts
komponiert. Es handelt sich nicht mehr darum, zu
"dichten". Das wichtigste ist das Beobachtete. -
(F.E.I.317)

Roth's emphasis then is on the narration of facts, a personal history. He sets out merely to retrace a period in history and to recreate it for his readers. "Das Beobachtete" represents reality reduced to a point in time; reality becomes an abstraction from an undifferentiated series of experiences to a single act, linked logically to other acts. The individual history is subsumed in the frame-work of a supra-personal history. In the opening paragraph of Die Flucht ohne Ende the events in Tunda's life which are pertinent to the unfolding of the narrative are baldly related in the context of objective

time:

Der Oberleutnant der österreichischen Armee Franz Tunda geriet im August des Jahres 1916 in russische Kriegsgefangenschaft. Er kam in ein Lager, einige Werst nordöstlich von Irkutsk. Es gelang ihm, mit Hilfe eines sibirischen Polen zu fliehen. Auf dem entfernten, einsamen und traurigen Gehöft des Polen, am Rande der Taiga, blieb der Offizier bis zum Frühling 1919. (F.E.I.319)

Tunda's experiences are pared down to their significant lines: they emerge with a certainty and stability which is a function of the succinct narration of complete actions. His case is merely an example, a tool for the construction of a world in which the details are important. Lukács too focussed on this concentration on detail as one of the characteristics of the "Bericht"-form.

Er (der Schriftsteller) will Einzelheiten entlarven. Hier ist es aber ausschlaggebend wichtig, daß diese Einzelheiten auch stimmen. (1)

An examination of Lukács typology of the "Reportage" mode of creative writing will highlight the ways in which Roth's "Bericht" diverges from what Lukács considers to be the normal pattern. We will see how Roth enlarges the concept of "Bericht" to accommodate the subliminal areas of human consciousness, psychic events which, in Bruno Schulz' terms "have been left out in the cold, unregistered, hanging in the air, homeless, and errant..." (2).

The narrative implied by the "Bericht"-form is the ideal tool for the construction of a homogeneous world which is

(1) Georg Lukács. "Reportage oder Gestaltung?" (1932), in: Essays über Realismus (collected works, vol.4), Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied/Berlin, 1971, p.43

(2) Bruno Schulz. "The Age of Genius", in: Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass (trans.Celina Wienewska), Pan Books, London, 1980, p.14

of necessity imbued with a certain stability - a world which is firmly under the narrator's control. Yet the diversification of the narrative perspectives within the novel undermines this reality and indeed flaunts it as an illusion. The only "reality" which emerges with any integrity at the end of the novel is a purely subjective construct. (1) This dual vision with regard to reality as it confronts us in the novel also informs our view of its hero, Franz Tunda. To the extent that the novel unfolds in the context of objective, historical time, Tunda sinks to the level of a mere representative figure. The events which happened to him between the years 1916 and 1919 could indeed have happened to anyone. Tunda was selected by pure chance. Yet the diversification of narrative perspectives, which, as will be seen, concur with the perspective of the hero, make Tunda emerge as the only individual who could have had the experiences as they are described. Within the novel then, chance becomes equated with necessity. Engels encapsulates this in Hegel's words:

"das Zufällige hat einen Grund, weil es zufällig ist, und hat ebenso sehr auch keinen Grund, weil es zufällig ist; daß das Zufällige notwendig ist, daß die Notwendigkeit sich selbst als Zufälligkeit be-

(1) compare Luigi Pirandello. Right You Are! (If You Think So), Penguin Plays, London, 1962, p.196

They have created, she for him and he for her, a world of fantasy that has all the substance of reality itself, a world in which they now live in perfect peace and harmony...it cannot be destroyed... because they live and breathe in it!...so you're condemned to the wonderful torment of having before your very eyes,...on the one hand, this world of fantasy and on the other, reality...and of not being able to distinguish one from the other!

stimmt und andererseits diese Zufälligkeit vielmehr die absolute Notwendigkeit ist." (1)

For Lukács the "Reportageroman" was a minute representation of a "Wirklichkeitsausschnittes", that is of a restricted set of circumstances snatched out of the wider social context:

...hier sollte resolut bloß das Objektive, das rein Typische, das von den Individuen Unabhängige dargestellt werden. (2)

As a result, the hero of the novel becomes a mere representative figure.

Die "Entwicklung" des Helden ist von vornherein als Rechenexempel gemacht...anfangs die These, dann der Beweis. (3)

There is implicit in this statement an extremely narrow conception of the role of the narrator. He is seen purely as an external authority; his role is confined to an authoritative unravelling of the facts, and to the setting up of guidelines for their interpretation. The result of this restricted narrative perspective is the complete absence of the subtle dialectic which makes a necessity out of a chance. Lukács makes this point himself in his extensive criticism of a contemporary novel by Ernst Ottwalt. (4)

Der begriffliche Inhalt des Buches ist von starrer, mechanistischer Notwendigkeit; mechanistisch, weil,... die Wechselwirkung mit dem Gesamtprozess, die Einfügung des Teilgebietes in die Totalität fehlt. Alles Einzelne,...ist...zufällig... Darum fehlt zwischen den einzelnen Gliedern...die Beispielreihe..., die als Personen maskiert, den Roman ausmachen, jeder Zusammenhang. (5)

(1) Friedrich Engels, in: Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.50

(2) Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.38

(3) Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.47

(4) Ernst Ottwalt. Denn sie wissen, was sie tun. Ein deutscher Justiz-Roman, Malik Verlag, Berlin, 1931

(5) Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.50

An examination of the narrative perspectives in Die Flucht ohne Ende will reveal the extent to which a variety of different perspectives are subtly woven into the fabric of the novel. The diversity of the narrative perspectives means that the novel operates simultaneously on two different planes. The role of the narrator as an external authority, that is as authoritative in respect to the truth of the facts, provides the reader with a literary representation of the objective characteristics of modern existence. The nature of his vision is analogous to the vision of the "Neue Sachlichkeit" artist: the primacy of the object is substituted by the equally narrow focus on facts which are verifiable within the context of the fiction. But facts are of necessity consigned to the past. A narrative perspective which is restricted in scope to a mere recital of facts amounts to no more than an act of repossession, or reaffirmation of the past. - In Mayer's words -

...eine skeptische Betonung der statischen Begebenheiten. (1)

Yet this concentration on the isolated fact, or object in itself implies a diversification of narrative technique. As the facts stand for themselves, the role of the narrator diminishes in importance. As well as authoritatively describing people and objects, the narrator seeks to penetrate them, to illumine their essence from the inside.

(1) Hans Meyer. "Zur deutschen Literatur der Zeit", in: A.V. Subiotto. "Neue Sachlichkeit: A Reassessment", in: Deutung und Bedeutung, The Hague, 1973

We shall see that the two different approaches - the "wissenschaftlich" (s. Lukács on the "Reportageroman"), and the psychological are not necessarily incompatible. Yet the introduction of what we shall term for the moment the psychological penetration of the hero, and categorize later, does not entail the abandonment of the claims of realism: it will be seen that it merely enlarges the scope of realism to include the portrayal of ethical purpose. The "skeptische Betonung der statischen Begebenheiten" (see above page 99, note 1) is complemented by the movement of the hero towards a degree of self-knowledge.

Already we see a picture of considerable complexity beginning to emerge. The narrative perspective in Die Flucht ohne Ende is one of great subtlety and deserves a systematic analysis.

The duality of the narrative perspective becomes apparent in the first paragraph of the novel. At first glance the opening lines seem steadily narrational. The descriptive elements converge on the facts given. They serve merely to underline the authenticity of the details of Tunda's life. The only three "divergent" adjectives, that is those which do not serve to substantiate the bare structure of the narrative, are "entfremdeten", "einsamen", and "traurigen". These adjectives point to a dimension which transcends that of narrated fact. They imply the existence of a narrator who both orders and participates in the reality within the fiction. The "objectivity" of the

narration is thus undermined from the outset. These adjectives allude to a new psychological reality which cannot be reduced to the series of antecedents and consequences demanded by the narrative tense of the report.

The narrative perspective of Die Flucht ohne Ende is thus a highly mobile one. Events and people are seen in different lights. This diversification of perspectives breaks up the form of harmonious narration and encourages the reader to participate in the narrative by critically reflecting on the events which befall Tunda. The narrator quickly abandons the "objective" "Bericht"-form and aligns himself with the thoughts of the hero. He adopts a dualistic attitude towards Tunda. The narrator makes the reader aware of Tunda's feelings, without abandoning his role as "objective" narrator of facts. He lays no claims to omniscience, he merely speculates as to the nature of Tunda's thoughts:

Er wollte die Stille nicht stören, wahrscheinlich hatte er auch Angst, die Teller würden zerbrechen. Seine Hände zitterten. (F.E.I.320) (my emphasis)

Yet the narrator's perspective diverges from Tunda's to the extent that he is able to describe the hero's physical appearance while illuminating his psychological state. The reader is thus distanced from Tunda, prevented from identifying totally with him, and provoked to critical reflection. The narrator further reveals the personality of Franz Tunda by combining one of the main indicators of his role as "raunenden Beschwörer des Imperfekts" (1), the

(1) Thomas Mann. Der Zauberberg, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, vol.1, p.1

simple narrative tense, with vocabulary and a naiveté of expression which imply the perspective of the hero:

Von ihr (Irene) wußte der Oberleutnant nichts mehr, als daß sie schön, klug, reich und blond war. Diese vier Eigenschaften hatten sie befähigt, seine Braut zu werden. (F.E.I.321)

The very structure of the sentence highlights the simplicity of Tunda's view of the world. He is content with mere surface description - there is no attempt at a hierarchal ordering of impressions: the adjectives "schön", "klug", "reich" and "blond" are seen to represent attributes of equal value. By casually accepting the validity of Tunda's views, the narrator subtly ironizes the simplicity of such an outlook, and of the naive self-esteem which is implicit in the belief that a woman must "qualify", however informally, to be the bride of an "Oberleutnant".

Tunda is not, however, presented as completely lacking in insight. The foundations for his development towards self-knowledge are laid firmly within the fiction:

Daß sie auf ihn wartete,...daran zweifelte er nicht. Daß sie aber aufhören würde, ihn zu lieben, wenn er einmal da war und vor ihr stand, schien ihm ebenso gewiß. (F.E.I.321)

The reasons for Tunda's belief are given by the narrator, who again uses Tunda's vocabulary to ironize the naiveté of his position:

Die große Trauer der Welt verschönte ihn damals, die Nähe des Todes vergrößerte ihn, die Weihe eines Begrabenen lag um den Lebendigen, das Kreuz auf der Brust gemahnte an das Kreuz auf einem Hügel. Rechnete man auf ein glückliches Ende, so warteten nach dem triumphalen Marsch der siegreichen Truppen über die Ringstraße der goldene Kragen des Majors, die Stabsschule und schließlich der Generalsrang, alles umweht von dem weichen Trommelklang des Radetzky-Marsches. (F.E.I.321)

Trapped in his illusions of a great military career, Tunda is unable to come to terms with his own existence: his identity is subsumed in the generality of "man". The abrupt return to authoritative, third person narration merely serves to illustrate the discrepancy between Tunda's illusions and reality:

Jetzt aber war Franz Tunda ein junger Mann ohne Namen, ohne Bedeutung, ohne Rang, ohne Titel, ohne Geld und ohne Beruf, heimatlos und rechtlos. (F.E.I.322)

The same dual perspective informs the narrator's description of Natascha. (F.E.I.328) He describes her external appearance and ironizes her illusions by incorporating her hackneyed revolutionary vocabulary into his description: The narrator describes how the severe Natascha regards all traces of femininity as indications of the "bourgeoise Weltanschauung" she so vehemently despises. She regards the entire female sex as "...den unberechtigten Überrest einer besiegten, verröchelnden Welt."

The narrator describes how she acknowledges her lover Tunda's "erotische Ebenbürtigkeit" but despises what she considers his "bürgerlichen Horizont". (F.E.I.328) The narrator highlights Natascha's lack of insight into her situation by continually using the verb "Sie wußte nicht".

Sie wußte nicht, daß Mut die Tugend der Frauen ist und Furchtsamkeit die Klugheit der Männer. Sie wußte auch nicht, daß alle Männer nur deshalb ihre guten Kameraden waren, weil alle sie liebten. Sie wußte nicht, daß Männer keusch sind und sich schämen, ... (F.E.I.328)

The conversations between Natascha and Tunda illustrate the former's illusions. The narrator's metaphors emphasize her slavish devotion to revolutionary principles:

Es war, als hätte sie das alte, aber für seine Zeit...anständig gebaute Modell einer heute schon weit übertroffenen Pistole betrachtet, für moderne, revolutionäre Kriegsführung unmöglich zu gebrauchen. (F.E.I.329)

It would be wrong to describe the narrator's authoritative insights into Natascha's personality as "omniscient". Roth has created a narrator who fills the specific needs of a novel which focusses on the hero's gradual movement towards self-awareness. The narrator's point of view is closely aligned with Franz Tunda's. His function is to prepare the reader for Tunda's journey towards self-knowledge by anticipating the hero's discovery of Natascha's true nature. The narrator's ironical exposure of Natascha's naive revolutionary fervour has the effect of highlighting the naiveté of Tunda's illusions about her. It is by exploiting fully the conventions of the novel and consciously relating the future to the present that Roth works against the narrow conception of the novel as a means of reducing reality to a point in time, or to a series of acts in time. He seeks to re-establish the novel as a receptacle of "existence in all its density" (1). Roth undermines from within the novel all the signs of his art which point to the existence of an elaborately constructed, self-sufficient world. He takes time as a sign of existence and fractures it. He views Tunda's life as a series of existential moments, as a series of confrontations with a social reality which is hardly

(1) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero, (trans. A.Lavers and C. Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.38

intelligible to him: his illusions are exposed by the subsumption by the benevolent narrator of his future in his present. If the past and future can be said to have meaning only in as far as they are related to the present, then the present must contain elements of the past and future. It is by consciously relating two different conceptions of time - the flow of chronological time and time as a private, subjective experience - that Roth alludes

to a higher and more hidden state of being which is the very secret and splendour of art. (1)

The narrative perspective most suited to convey Tunda's subjective experience of time is the "erlebte-Rede". The narrator first reinforces the ridiculous nature of Nata-scha's convictions by some ironical comments of his own:

Sie blieb wach und kontrollierte ihre Genüsse wie ein Posten die Geräusche der Nacht. Die körperliche Liebe war eine Forderung der Natur. (F.E.I.329)

The next sentence marks a distinct shift back to Tunda's perspective:

Tunda hatte sich weibliche Soldaten immer so vorgestellt. (F.E.I.329)

The following sentence is a reproduction of Tunda's thoughts totally from his own perspective:

Diese Frau war wie aus Büchern gestiegen, ihrer literarisch bekräftigten Existenz ergab er sich mit Bewunderung und der demütigen Treue eines Mannes, der nach falschen Überlieferungen in einer entschlossenen Frau eine Ausnahme sieht und nicht die Regel. (F.E.I.329-30)

The reference to fiction within fiction both posits a

(1) Carlo Carrà, in: Werner Haftmann. Painting in the Twentieth Century, vol.I, Lund Humphries, London, 1960, p.175

second layer of reality and flaunts the "reality" of the "Bericht" as an illusion. Roland Barthes describes the way the novel functions as follows:

...since what is sought is to impart an essence in the guise of an artefact... This is what writing does in the novel. Its task is to put the mask in place and at the same time to point it out. (1)

In Die Flucht ohne Ende the "Bericht"-form is the mask: we are presented with a representation which alludes closely to reality, but is distanced from it. This distancing effect is not merely the product of the subtle relationship between the diverging narrative perspectives - the "Bericht"-form and the narration from the point of view of the hero. It is also a function of the intricate relationship between the narrator and the hero. The narrator anticipates Tunda's increasing self-awareness and exposes the falsity of the represented reality from within the "Bericht"-form itself:

Es gab ein Klischee für Proteste und Aufrufe, ein zweites für Skizzen und Erinnerungen, ein drittes für Empörung und Anklage. Seine Gesinnung war revolutionärer als diese fertige Sprache. Er übernahm nur das Handwerkzeug. Schriftsteller erleben alles durch das Mittel der Sprache, sie haben kein Erlebnis ohne Formulierung. Tunda aber suchte nach bestehenden, oft erprobten und zuverlässigen Formulierungen, um nicht im Erlebnis unterzugehen. (F.E.I.333)

Language as a rigid system of expression becomes the symbol of a conception of social reality as a pre-ordained and unchanging constant, which is out of step with the needs of the developing hero. Tunda has not yet reached the degree of self-awareness which would enable him to free himself from this outworn image of reality.

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.40

The resumption of direct speech indicates that the narration is once again entirely from Tunda's perspective:

"...Mir scheint, jetzt beginnt endlich die Zeit, in der man nicht opfert. Wir haben nichts, wir haben ja das Eigentum abgeschafft, nicht wahr? Auch unser Leben gehört uns nicht mehr. Wir sind frei. Was wir haben, gehört allen..." (F.E.I.335)

The present tense marks the severing of Tunda's development from the carefully constructed world of narrative history. Tunda's experience represents a simultaneous present, a loosening of existential roots, of all links with the past: as his movement towards freedom entails transcending the succession of events, its natural stylistic analogue is direct speech. Yet the development of the hero is not merely incidental to the narrative representation of the objective characteristics of modern existence. The events of the revolution are reconstructed for the reader largely from Tunda's point of view: In this way they become the pre-condition for his increasing sense of personal freedom. It is the theme of the recognition of individual freedom that provides the link between the development of the main character and the ideological texture of the work: Roth was always ready to point out the importance of the close links between different elements of narrative.

In der sogenannten Prosa muß gerade der Zusammenhang die Stimmung erzeugen. (1)

The ethical purpose of Die Flucht ohne Ende, the gradual

(1) Joseph Roth, in: Joseph Roth. Briefe. 1911-1939 (ed. H.Kesten), Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970, p.78

movement of its hero, Franz Tunda, towards self-realization, which forms the substance of the novel, is reflected in the expressive medium itself. The present tense represents a simultaneous present, which outruns the flow of history as it is presented by the narrative tense of the "Bericht"-form. The gulf which separates the present from the past tense can be seen to reflect Tunda's increasing alienation from post-revolutionary society. The present tense becomes of increasing importance as the novel progresses. Although there is a shift back to the past tense in Tunda's diary entry (chp.IX, F.E.I.343 - he relates his encounter with Frau G), the diary as a personal record implies a distancing from the flow of narrated fact. The diary entry represents a formal break with the laws of history as encapsulated in the form of the narrative tense. The very act of transcending the closed, carefully structured realm of substantial acts expressed by the "Bericht"-form, the narrative tense, implies a new perspective on that realm. Following the lead of the narrator, the reader has fully engaged his sympathies with Tunda in his movement towards self-realization. This identification with the perspective of the hero implies the participation of the reader in reflections on the ideological texture of what is presented to him in the "Bericht". The ideological content of the work is thus seen to emerge only when it is viewed in relation to the development of the hero. In Althusserian terms, what Roth effects by introducing the present tense into the steadily narrational "Bericht"-form

is an artistic representation of the process of the disruption of the "imaginary" forms through which the individual's relationship to the circumstances of his social existence is made known to him. The stable "reality" of what is laid before us in the "Bericht"-form is exploded. The world represented in the novel, once so carefully constructed, lies sprawling before us; its essential unintelligibility is finally unmasked. This stripping away of the mask which conceals the true nature of reality as a subjective construct is the theme which ultimately links the ideological texture of the work with the development of the hero. The true significance of this relationship emerges in its symbolic function. The novel is in itself

...Ausdruck und Exponent eines Geistig-Allgemeineren..., einer ganzen Gefühls- und Gesinnungswelt, welche in ihm ihr mehr oder weniger vollkommenes Sinnbild gefunden hat, - ... (1)

It becomes a representation of what Althusser considered to be one of the main functions of art: to distance man from the dominant ideology and to urge him to reflect critically upon it. It was precisely this radical shift in perspective that the Italian artist de Chirico aimed to convey in his art:

But suppose that one link in this chain (the endless rosary made from recollections of our relationships with things) breaks for a moment, for unexpected reasons independent of our will, and who can tell me how this man, this bird-cage, these books will appear to me? Terror and amazement... Yet the scene itself remains unchanged, I merely see it from a different angle. And here we have arrived at the metaphysical aspect of things. (2)

(1) Thomas Mann, op.cit., vol.II, p.689

(2) Giorgio de Chirico, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.177

This disorganization of the conventional forms through which the world is perceived - which is initiated from within the novel itself - results in a new way of seeing the social order: its unexpected and disconcerting aspects are fully revealed. This new way of seeing accords with the perspective of the hero. This can be illustrated by reference to a short speech of Laudisi, who functions as chorus/narrator/character in Pirandello's play Right You Are! (If You Think So) (1):

It's you, not I, who have need of the precise facts of the case, of documents to deny this or to affirm that! I don't care a brass farthing for them, because as far as I'm concerned they don't constitute reality. Reality for me lies in the minds of those two, and I can only hope to penetrate to that reality through what they tell me about themselves.

The individual's relationship to social reality is profoundly dislocated. In an attempt to efface a sprawling, fragmented reality which is essentially unintelligible to him, he constructs for himself a new reality - a reality which is coherent and in which he can find his own image. Within the context of the novel, reality becomes equated with illusion, and illusion with a new reality constructed to fulfil the needs of the individual. This is precisely the formula which Max Beckmann claimed governed his art:

Es handelt sich darum, eine elegante Beherrschung des Metaphysischen zu erreichen. Straffe, klare, disziplinierte Romantik unserer eigenen im äußersten Maße unwirklichen Existenz zu leben. (2)

(1) Luigi Pirandello, op.cit. p.195

(2) Max Beckmann. "Europäische Revue", Juli, 1927, pp.288-291, in: Tendenzen der Zwanziger Jahre (15. Europäische Kunstausstellung, Berlin, 1977), 4/49

The rejection of social reality as presented in the "Bericht" is a precondition of the attainment of a degree of personal freedom. For Tunda, Frau G becomes closely identified with Irene:

Als mich die Dame ansah, fiel mir Irene ein,...
(F.E.I.345)

Tunda's past, as represented by his relationship with Irene, is subsumed in his present (the encounter with Frau G). His experiences are represented as simultaneously present within the "Bericht"-form. As the domain of private time is liberated from the causal connections implied by the flow of chronological time, the individual becomes free to determine the direction of his own future. Like the protagonists in Pirandello's play, Tunda chooses to put his faith in an illusory world of his own making. The coherence of the novel is maintained by the fact that Tunda's choice is also documented by the narrator:

Die Frauen, die uns begegnen, erregen mehr unsere Phantasie als unser Herz. Wir lieben die Welt, die sie repräsentieren, und das Schicksal, das sie uns bedeuten. (F.E.I.350)

Earlier on the narrator remarks on Tunda's re-modelling of illusion as reality:

Im Laufe der Zeit, in der sie sich nicht sahen, wurde Baranowicz wirklich sein Bruder. (F.E.I.342)

In the subtle dialectic which unites the diverse elements in the novel, the diary entries, Tunda's letters, and the narrative report serve to reinforce the illusion of veracity which underpins the "objective" "Bericht".

Tunda's alienation from social reality is highlighted, and the intricate relationship between the content and

substance of the novel reaffirmed, by the divergence of the narrator's perspective from the hero's:

Eines Tages erschien im österreichischen Konsulat in Moskau ein Fremder... (F.E.I.351)

The dominant perspective in chapter X is "meta-narrational", that is the "Bericht"-form itself functions as a system of symbols used to describe Tunda's own report of events:

Der Fremde gab an, daß er im Jahre 1916 als österreichischer Oberleutnant in ein sibirisches Kriegsgefangenenlager gekommen war. (F.E.I.351)

The effect of this is to further alienate Tunda's past by reifying it within the context of the "Bericht"-form. This stylistic device represents the severance of all links with the past: Tunda exists in a simultaneous present which becomes a metaphor for a new mode of perception. The rest of the chapter is characterized by the subtle alternation of narrative perspectives. The narrator reports Tunda's thoughts as they occur:

Denn er nahm an, daß er von der Polizei beaufsichtigt und daß seine Rückkehr ihn verraten würde. Er befand sich in einer jener Situationen, in denen man durch äußere Umstände gezwungen wird, ein Unrecht, das man mit Willen und Wissen begeht, noch gegen den eigenen Willen zu verschärfen. (F.E.I.352)

The adoption of the impersonal pronoun "man" can be seen to represent Tunda's alienation from the situation in which he finds himself. The pronoun "man" can also be interpreted as a symbol for Tunda's inability to define the course of his own existence. We find confirmation of this interpretation later on in the chapter:

Es war so gekommen wie alles in seinem Leben, wie das meiste und Wichtigste auch im Leben der anderen kommt, die durch eine geräuschvolle und mehr bewußte Aktivität

verführt werden, an die Freiwilligkeit ihrer Entschlüssen und Handlungen zu glauben. Indessen vergessen sie nur über ihren eigenen lebhaften Bewegungen die Schritte des Schicksals. (F.E.I.352-3)

The experience of existence in its simultaneity- "eine ganz bestimmte Vorläufigkeit, die kein Ende hat" - (F.E.I. 355) entails the paralysis of all action. Action can only unfold in time, as it presupposes uniting a cause with an end which partake of a successive order. In this state of timeless suspension, reflection becomes a substitute for action. In his letter Tunda demonstrates his realization of the nature of his situation, and his total inability to take decisive action:

"Ich habe nichts zu verlieren. Ich bin weder mutig noch abenteuerlustig. Ein Wind treibt mich, und ich fürchte nicht den Untergang." (F.E.I.354)

Tunda stresses the intensity of his isolation in a letter to the narrator:

"...- ich glaube, daß ich sehr fremd in dieser Welt geworden bin - ". (F.E.I.354)

He penetrates behind the image of post-revolutionary society and exposes some of the flaws which characterize it. Deprived of the means by which to define the course of his own life, the individual can only analyze the conditions of his existence:

"Aber es ist ein großes und breites, verworrenes, mit Absicht, Kunst, und viel Raffinement verworrenes Verwaltungssystem in den Sowjetstaaten, innerhalb dessen jeder einzelne nur ein kleiner oder größerer Punkt ist, verbunden mit einem nächstgrößeren Punkt und nichts ahnend von seiner Bedeutung für das Ganze." (F.E.I.355)

Confronted by the collapse of what he had considered as a young officer to be an integral world order, and

disillusioned with the course of the revolution, Tunda experiences the full meaninglessness of existence. The symbolic value of his personal tragedy is reflected in the form of expression:

"Ich stelle mir vor, daß die Toten einen Augenblick lang in dieser Situation sind, wenn sie das irdische Leben aufgegeben und das andere noch nicht begonnen haben." (F.E.I.354)

As the dead in the image transcend the realms of both the living and the dead, so Tunda becomes the representative of a typological turning point. His retreat into the world of private duration, which, as we have seen, is reflected in the form of the novel, is in dialectical opposition to the flow of chronological time. Snatched out of the flow of history, as the dead are from the realm of the living, he becomes a symbol of human alienation. Tunda's alienation is highlighted by references to the playing out of roles in the novel:

Ich spiele meine Rolle als eben heimgekehrter 'Sibiriak' weiter. (F.E.I.357)

The theme of role playing is also the subject of the long conversation between Tunda and the "Fabrikant" in chapter XIX. The individual is seen to be unable to define the course of his own existence. He resigns himself to conforming to an image which does not correspond to his true identity:

"Jeder hat seine Rolle. So ist es in unserer Stadt. Die Haut, in der jeder steckt, ist nicht seine eigene. Und wie in unserer Stadt, ist es in allen, wenigstens in hundert größeren Städten unseres Landes." (F.E.I.377)

As we have seen, the only "reality" of any substance is

a subjective construct. Tunda's actual experiences take on the mask of illusion:

"Man fragt mich nach meinen Erlebnissen, und ich lüge, so gut ich kann." (F.E.I.357)

Tunda's journey to Germany functions as a double symbol within the novel. It represents the shifting ground of human existence at a point in history: it also becomes a symbol of existence outwith the realm of chronological time. The journey is the physical analogue of Tunda's movement towards a more profound awareness of his situation - an awareness which leads him to cut all links with his objective existence and to devote himself entirely to an image of life that is no more than an allusion to reality. As the narrator points out:

Dachte Tunda an Irene, so erschien sie ihm ebenso-
weit von dieser...Welt entfernt wie er selbst...
(F.E.I.417)

The beginning of chapter XIII marks the resumption of the authoritative narrative perspective. The intricacy of the relationship between the narrator and Tunda once again becomes apparent: by subtly ironizing the life-style of the "Kapellmeister", the narrator takes Tunda's part, working the latter's alienation from society into the fabric of the "objective" "Bericht"-form. His identification with Tunda is made obvious:

Es war Franz, mein Freund, der Urheber dieser verdrossenen Schweigsamkeit. (F.E.I.360)

The narrator, building on the spirit of complicity which he has established between himself and the reader, makes

no attempt to dissipate the strength of his own feelings in the "objective" "Bericht"-form: He describes Tunda's brother's wife in the following terms:

Sie erweckte den Eindruck, daß sie von weit her kam, Gefahren in dunklen Wäldern zu bestehen hatte, sie erinnerte an Bürgerkrieg. (F.E.I.368)

The expressions of qualms of conscience is heavily ironical and serves merely to ridicule the attitudes Klara adopts.

Ich habe bei dieser Beschreibung Klaras kein gutes Gewissen... Sie war nämlich tugendhaft, Klara, wie konnte sie anders? (F.E.I.362)

Apart from the first two sentences, in which the narrator sets the scene, the opening lines of chapter XVI are narrated entirely from Tunda's perspective:

Er sah von Deutschland nur die Bahnhöfe, die Schilder, die Reklametafeln, die Kirchen, die Gasthöfe in der Nähe der Bahn, die stillen und grauen Straßen der Vorstädte und die Vorortbahnen, die an müde, dem Stall entgegentrabende Tiere erinnerten. (F.E.I.364)

Tunda's estrangement from what is presented as social reality within the novel is conveyed by the means of expression. Our access to "reality" is mediated through Tunda's new form of cognition. The loose sentence structure, the absence of predicates, symbols of the relationships between objects which impose meaning on the whole, reflects Tunda's experience of the world as lacking in essential unity. Tunda's walk through the town on the morning after his arrival is also related as a group of visual impressions:

Über die Straße fegten abgeschminkte Freudenmädchen außer Dienst. Sie gemahnten an den Tod. Einige trugen Brillen.

Eine Gruppe hurtiger Radfahrer glitt klingelnd einher... Vereinzelt, gleichsam versprengte Feuerwehrmänner spazierten blinkend mit Weib und Kind.

Kreiskriegerverbände lockten auf den Litfaßsäulen
mit großen Militär-Doppelkonzerten....

Ein verwachsener, komischer Zwerg verkaufte Schnür-
senkel.

Ein Epileptiker lag zuckend in der Sonne. (F.E.I.371)

The absence of a steadily narrational line linking one impression with another reflects Tunda's experience of the world as fragmented. The lack of series implied by the absence of the narrational form which links a cause with an end, is the stylistic expression of Tunda's retreat into the realm of private duration, where succession is re-unified into simultaneous experience. Tunda's alienation from a world which he views as fragmented is reflected in and reinforced by the description of the people whom he observes. Their physical disabilities ("Zwerg", "Epileptiker"), or their status as social outcasts ("Freudenmädchen") become the physical expression of Tunda's distorted relations to social reality. The individuals are isolated from one another ("vereinzelt"), and thus reflect Tunda's own experience of detachment and alienation. Once again, death becomes a symbol of the individual's acute sense of estrangement - ("Freudenmädchen... Sie gemahnten an den Tod.")

The succeeding chapters are characterized by alternating narrative perspectives - the narrator's, which is steadily ironic, and Tunda's, which reflects his experience of the world as fragmented. Through the duality of the narrative perspectives, Roth effects a two-fold shift in the reader's perceptions of "reality". He demonstrates Tunda's increasing sense of estrangement from "reality" as presented in

the novel by mediating our access to it through the new form of cognition as simultaneous experience, developed through Tunda. By employing irony, which implies a multifaceted conception of reality, Roth calls into question the processes through which reality is presented as a single series of acts in the "Bericht". The "Bericht" then, is the stylistic device through which he puts the mask in place and points it out. The unity of the novel is maintained by the fact that the "Bericht"-form, which normally posits a view of a stable and carefully constructed reality, undermines that conception of reality. The narrative form itself can be seen to reflect and re-enforce Tunda's discovery that in the face of the sprawling and unintelligible reality set before him he must attempt to construct a more harmonious version.

"Ich werfe mir vor, daß ich mich wehrlos den Zufällen ausgeliefert habe. Jetzt ist es mir, als müßte ich Irene suchen, um mich zu rehabilitieren." (F.E.I.388-9)

By skilful use of irony, and by subtly interweaving a variety of narrative perspectives, Roth consciously estranges the "Bericht"-form from its archetype. The form of the novel itself is thus a re-enactment of Tunda's progressive alienation from reality.

The novel is in itself a symbol, an expression and exponent of a more general spiritual situation. The scope of the realistic account of Tunda's life is extended to include the process by which he constructs his own reality. As this new reality is confined to the realm of private time, it is merely a mode of perception, providing no guidelines

for action:

Es war um diese Stunde, da stand mein Freund Tunda, 32 Jahre alt, gesund und frisch, ein junger, starker Mann von allerhand Talenten, auf dem Platz vor der Madeleine, inmitten der Hauptstadt der Welt und wußte nicht, was er machen sollte. Er hatte keinen Beruf, keine Liebe, keine Lust, keine Hoffnung, keinen Ehrgeiz und nicht einmal Egoismus. So überflüssig wie er war niemand in der Welt. (F.E.I. 421)

The re-adoption of the "Bericht"-form, with the renewed references to objective, historical time ("Es war am 27. August 1926, um vier Uhr nachmittags,...") (F.E.I.421) distances the reader from Tunda, opening up the channels for our recognition of his fundamental estrangement.

The dialectic which informs the relationship between form and content becomes particularly apparent at the end of the novel. As content is the dominant element, the form of the novel reflects the life played out within it. As Tunda has consigned himself to a realm of private time, no action is possible and the novel is brought to a conclusion. The formal break in the narrative flow, the medium through which objective time is expressed, is a symbol of Tunda's flight from the undifferentiated series of experiences which constitute the "objective" reality of the novel. The title Die Flucht ohne Ende refers to a flight in the physical and metaphysical sense. "Es handelt sich darum, eine elegante Beherrschung des Metaphysischen zu erreichen..." (see above page 110, note 2) - an attempt to come to terms with reality by transcending it and re-modelling it according to the needs of the individual.

Chapter V.

Zipper und sein Vater

Manchmal ist die Welt kleinwitzig wie ein Ameisenhaufen. (1)

In the preceding chapter we saw the various ways in which Roth exploited the conventions of narrative fiction in order to reconstruct Franz Tunda's gradual discovery of the alien and mysterious nature of contemporary reality. In an essay Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman, Adorno suggests that it is the writer's sense of alienation which provides the main impulse for the writing of a novel:

An seinem Beginn steht die Erfahrung von der entzauberten Welt im Don Quixote, und die künstlerische Bewältigung bloßen Daseins ist sein Element geblieben. Der Realismus war ihm immanent; (2)

According to Adorno, the novel is the artistic medium best suited to record man's increasing sense of alienation in the modern world. (3) Yet an attempt to come to terms with "die universale Entfremdung und Selbstentfremdung" leads to the emergence of tensions inherent in the

(1) Joseph Roth. "Artisten", Der Neue Tag, 25.1.1920, vol. IV., p.785.

(2) Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, in: Noten zur Literatur I., Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1965, p.61.

(3) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.64.
Die Verdinglichung aller Beziehungen zwischen den Individuen, die ihre menschlichen Eigenschaften in Schmieröl für den glatten Ablauf der Maschinerie verwandelt, die universale Entfremdung und Selbstentfremdung, fordert beim Wort gerufen zu werden, und dazu ist der Roman qualifiziert wie wenig andere Kunstformen.

novel form itself. As the breakdown of a coherent social reality has made conventional realism in the manner of Flaubert impossible (1), Adorno notes the increased importance of auctorial subjectivity, and documents a subtle change in the centre of gravity of the modern novel. For ease of reference I quote the passage in full:

Denn je fremder die Menschen, die Einzelnen und die Kollektive, einander geworden sind, desto rätselhafter werden sie einander zugleich, und der Versuch, das Rätsel des äußeren Lebens zu dechiffrieren, der eigentliche Impuls des Romans, geht über in die Bemühung ums Wesen, das gerade in der von Konventionen gesetzten, vertrauten Fremdheit nun seinerseits bestürzend, doppelt fremd erscheint. Das anti-realistische Moment des neuen Romans, seine metaphysische Dimension, wird selber gezeitigt von seinem realen Gegenstand, einer Gesellschaft, in der die Menschen voneinander und von sich selber gerissen sind. In der ästhetischen Transzendenz reflektiert sich die Entzauberung der Welt. (2) (my emphasis)

An analysis of the structural elements of Roth's novel Zipper und sein Vater will show that the portrayal of what Adorno termed the "metaphysische Dimension" of the modern novel does not necessarily take place at the expense of realism.

In his short description of the evolution of the modern novel Adorno points out that much material which traditionally belonged within the scope of the novelist has been taken over by writers of the "Bericht". The task of

(1) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.64

Will der Roman seinem realistischen Erbe treu bleiben und sagen, wie es wirklich ist, so muß er auf einen Realismus verzichten, der, indem er die Fassade reproduziert, nur dieser bei ihrem Täuschungsgeschäfte hilft.

(2) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.65

the novelist then is thus to deal with that area of human experience which cannot be pared down to the significant lines of the "Bericht": Adorno expressed this development as follows:

Der Roman müßte sich auf das konzentrieren, was nicht durch den Bericht abzugelten ist. (1)

As we saw earlier, Max Beckmann also believed that it is those aspects of man's existence that do not find expression in the course of his everyday life that are the true subject of any work of art:

Es handelt sich darum, eine elegante Beherrschung des Metaphysischen zu erreichen. (2)

The tension inherent in the form of the novel comes to light when we consider the natural means of expression of the novelist, discursive narrative. As we saw in the chapter on Die Flucht ohne Ende, the narrative tense posits a set of clearly related actions: it is the ideal tool for the construction of a stable, coherent reality. Adorno also noted the tendency of narrative to divide and allocate both time and events and thus create the illusion of certainty.

Nur sind ihm (dem Roman) im Gegensatz zur Malerei in der Emanzipation vom Gegenstand Grenzen gesetzt durch die Sprache, die ihn weithin zur Fiktion des Berichts nötigt: (3) (my emphasis)

This myth of a coherent realm of human action is totally

(1) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.62

(2) Max Beckmann. "Europäische Revue", Juli 1927, pp.288-91, in: Tendenzen der Zwanziger Jahre (15. Europäische Kunstausstellung, Berlin, 1977), Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1977, 4/49.

(3) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.62

divorced from what Adorno considered to be modern man's essential condition, "die universale Entfremdung und Selbstentfremdung" (see above page 120, note 3). The paradox of the modern novel is thus seen to unfold on two distinct levels. The dichotomy between what Adorno considers the primary impulse of the novel, "das Rätsel des äußeren Lebens zu dechiffrieren", and what he terms "das anti-realistische Moment" - "die Bemühung ums Wesen" (see above page 121, note 2), arises from and in part reflects the alienated nature of the social reality from which the writer draws his material. However, this division has a subsidiary set of origins inherent in the form of the work itself. The dichotomy also arises from what Eikhenbaum described as the

constant tension between the unconscious and language... the internal dialectic of art. (1)

It is interesting to note that Eikhenbaum's views on the initial impetus for artistic creation concur with those of Max Beckmann, in his essay Europäische Revue of one year earlier (see above page 122, note 2).

The primary nature of art is the demand for the organisation and use of those energies of man's organism which are excluded from everyday life, or which function only partially or one-sidedly. (2)

The transference of "this basis, in essence playful" into a logical system of expression belies the initial alienation which provides the primary impulse for the writing of a novel. According to Adorno, the medium of the traditional realist writer, discursive narrative, merely

(1) Boris Eikhenbaum. "Literature and Cinema" (1926), in: Russian Formalism (ed. S. Bann and J. E. Bowlt), Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1973, p.123

(2) Boris Eikhenbaum, op.cit. p.123

deceived the reader, preventing him from recognizing the true conditions of his life by presenting him with an image of a homogeneous and stable world:

Will der Roman seinem realistischen Erbe treu bleiben und sagen, wie es wirklich ist, so muß er auf einen Realismus verzichten, der, indem er die Fassade reproduziert, nur dieser bei ihrem Täuschungsgeschäfte hilft. (1)

A detailed examination of Zipper und sein Vater will highlight the ways in which Roth undermines from within the medium of discursive narrative all the signs which point to the existence of an elaborately constructed world in which the individual has overcome all alienation. Zipper und sein Vater fulfils what Barthes considered to be the main task of the novel:

Its task is to put the mask in place and at the same time to point it out. (2)

In his essay Standort des Erzählers im zeitgenössischen Roman Adorno suggests that the conditions of modern life, the total alienation of the individual, have resulted in the breakdown of what he terms "die Identität der Erfahrung" (3) which is the precondition of the authoritative and unvarying perspective of the narrator. A detailed examination of the formal aspects of Zipper und sein Vater will reveal that what Roth achieves in the novel is the re-enactment of this gradual estrangement of the narrator from the people whose lives he sets before us. In Roth's novel

(1) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.64

(2) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero (trans. A.Lavers and C. Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.40

(3) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.62

Die Flucht ohne Ende we saw how the substance of the novel, the gradual movement of its hero, Franz Tunda, towards self-realization, was reflected in the form of the work itself. The present tense, used in the diary sections, represented a break with the laws of history as encapsulated in the narrative tense, and implied a new perspective on the carefully structured realm of logically linked acts. The gulf which separates the present from the past tense is a reflection in the form of the work of Tunda's increasing sense of alienation from contemporary society: it represents his movement towards self-realization.

Zipper und sein Vater provides us with a further illustration of the Hegelian dialectic of form and content. (1) It also serves to counter Adorno's point that the "Identität der Erfahrung" (see above page 124, note 3) which he considers a precondition of an unchanging narrative perspective, is necessary for a coherent and realistic story. The coherence and realism of the story in Roth's novel in fact demands the gradual disintegration of the identity of experience which the author represents through the relationship of the narrator to Arnold Zipper. The substance of the novel can in part be described as the documentation of the relationship between two men of the same generation. Their relationship moves through periods of considerable intimacy

(1) Friedrich Hegel, "Enzyklopädie" para.133, in: Georg Lukács. Essays über Realismus (collected works, vol.4), Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied/Berlin, 1971, p.51. ...so daß der Inhalt nichts ist, als Umschlagen der Form in Inhalt, und die Form nichts als Umschlagen des Inhalts in Form. Umschlagen ist eine der wichtigsten Bestimmungen.

(their shared childhood experiences, for example), to periods when they are at a great distance from each other, both physically and spiritually. (in the later stages of the war and during the time Arnold is following his actress-wife Erna around the world). An examination of the diversification of narrative perspectives in Zipper und sein Vater will show the extent to which they mirror the waxing and waning of the relationship between the two men.

The delicate interweaving of several narrative perspectives becomes apparent in the opening pages of the novel. Roth represents the narrator's identification with the young Arnold Zipper by using the language and syntax of a child. The novel opens with the characteristically blunt admission of a child:

Ich hatte keinen Vater - das heißt: ich habe meinen Vater nie gekannt -, Zipper aber besaß einen. (Z.I.425)

In the hierarchal order of things which is peculiar to children, a father is a prized possession which can only be equalled by "einen Papagei oder einen Bernhardiner". (Z.I.425) Arnold's father is described from the perspective of a child. The gambling incident in Monte Carlo appears totally mysterious to the naive child, and adds to the numerous attractions of "der alte Zipper".

Der Vater, mit dem wir bei hellichem Tage zusammenkamen, der ein Mensch war wie andere Menschen,... dieser Vater hatte irgendwann und gerade in Monte Carlo unter ungewöhnlichen Umständen etwas erlebt. (Z.I.426)

The closeness of the relationship between the narrator and Arnold's father, which is demonstrated by the affectionate way in which the elder Zipper treats his young

friend, also serves to broaden the scope of the realistic portrayal. The childish respect of the narrator for Zipper is reflected in the incorporation of the latter's vocabulary into the narrational description. Arnold's father is characterized through direct speech: his confident and authoritative assertions underline the apparent stability of the world he inhabits.

"Sag deiner Mutter, sie soll dich zum Friseur schicken. Im Hochsommer trägt man keine langen Haare... Kannst du schon schwimmen? Ein junger Mann muß schwimmen können!" (Z.I.425)

Yet even in the opening pages the reader is warned against the illusionary character of the story by the interspersion of the narrator's comments, which obviously diverge from the childlike perspective of the opening sentences.

Selbst wenn der Vater dem Sohn eine Unannehmlichkeit zufügte, so war es, als hätte Arnold sie selbst gewünscht. Der Vater war ein mächtiger, aber zugleich auch ein dienstbarer Geist. (Z.I.425)

With the benefit of hindsight, the narrator illumines Zipper's personality from a viewpoint which is more sophisticated than that of a naive child. The diversification of narrative perspectives is also apparent in the opening lines of Ch.II. (Z.I.427-8) The opening lines establish the narrator as an external authority and provide us with a brief description of the living conditions of the average "Bürger".

Die Familie Zipper wohnte in dem Viertel der kleinen Bürger, in dem die Wohnungen aus zu engen Zimmern bestehen, dünne Wände haben und nutzlosen Zierat enthalten. (Z.I.427)

The second paragraph marks a shift back to the child's perspective - the vocabulary reflects the childish awe

of the pretentious grandeur of the Zipper's "Salon".

Es gab einen außerordentlich noblen Raum in der Wohnung Zippers... Für uns, den jungen Zipper und mich, war das vornehme Zimmer, das man Salon nannte, am Sonntagnachmittag zugänglich, wenn wir versprochen, uns ruhig zu verhalten und "nichts zu zerbrechen". (Z.I.427-8) (my emphasis)

Roth effectively reaffirms the earlier characterization of Zipper und subtly ironizes his authoritative confidence by incorporating his phrases into the child-like perspective of the narrator.

By adopting a dual narrative perspective, Roth maintains a delicate balance between what Adorno considered as two mutually exclusive "impulses" of the novel: to provide a representation and an attempted explanation of contemporary society, - "das Rätsel des äußeren Lebens zu dechiffrieren", - and a subjective illumination of certain representatives of contemporary society, - "die Bemühung ums Wesen" (see above page 121, note 2).

Chapter III opens with a reflection of the narrator:

Wenn ich heute an den alten Zipper zurückdenke, so wundere ich mich darüber, daß ich damals seine große Trauer nicht bemerkt habe. (Z.I.433)

From within the context of the fiction itself, Roth warns the reader against the narrow perspective which results from the close association of the narrator with the characters. The breadth of the realistic portrayal, which encompasses both the elucidation of contemporary society and "eine elegante Beherrschung des Metaphysischen" (see above page 122, note 2), a subjective illumination of those aspects of human life which outrun the flow of

history, demands greater flexibility of narrative perspectives than Adorno allows. The incorporation of reflection into the body of the narrative in fact maintains what Lukács called the

lebendige dialektische Wechselwirkung von Form und Inhalt. (1),

and does not result in a rigid dichotomy of form and content as Adorno contends. By consciously relating the present tense to the narrative past, Roth exposes the lie of descriptive narrative, what Adorno termed "den illusionären Character des Dargestellten" (2), which reduces reality to a mere series of acts and belies the fact that the novel is the artistic medium singularly adapted to convey the complexities of existence. In so doing he reaffirms the unity of form and content by providing a formal parallel to the gradual distancing of the narrator from the events of his childhood.

The embodiment of memory into the narrative in the form of the present tense which outruns the flow of history as it is presented in the narrative "Bericht", is the means through which Roth presents "die metaphysische Dimension" (see above page 121, note 2), - "those energies of man's organism which are excluded from everyday life." (3)

The present tense undermines the conception of a stable existence which is entirely intelligible from any single

(1) Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.51

(2) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.68

(3) Boris Eikhenbaum, op.cit. p.123

perspective. The intermingling of reflection and narrative, the relation of the present to the past, does not, as Adorno suggests, result in the breakdown of realism. The act of transcending the closed, carefully structured realm of substantial acts expressed in the narrative tense merely enlarges the scope of realism to include the portrayal of

those subliminal, "end-in-themselves" tendencies which appear in every art form. (1)

The narrator's memories contradict his childlike perception of Zipper's world as essentially stable and harmonious:

Er macht mich traurig, jetzt, in diesen Stunden, da ich von ihm erzähle. Er hatte viel Kummer in seinem Leben und wahrscheinlich keinen Schmerz. Aber eben deshalb ist er so traurig, traurig wie ein aufgeräumtes Zimmer, traurig wie eine Sonnenuhr im Schatten, traurig wie ein ausrangierter Waggon auf einem rostigen Gleis. (Z.I.433)

The narrator illuminates the relationship between Zipper and his wife, highlighting their deep resignation to their lack of communication:

Sie sind zwei alte Feinde, die aus Mangel an Kampfmitteln einen Waffenstillstand schließen, der aussieht wie ein Bündnis. (Z.I.433)

The narrator abandons the limited perspective of a mere observer:

Aber in den Augenblicken, die wir fremden Beobachter nicht kennen, gebrauchen sie noch gegeneinander die übriggebliebenen Reste der Waffen,... (Z.I.434)

Narration from the perspective of a child meant the exclusion of any description of Frau Zipper. The reader's attention followed the interests of the child which

(1) Boris Eikhenbaum, op.cit. p.123

focussed only on the exploits of Arnold's father. The more distanced, authoritative narrative perspective enlarges the scope of realism. Frau Zipper's appearance is minutely described:

Das Angesicht der Frau Zipper wird mir immer in Erinnerung bleiben. Es lag hinter einem feuchten Schleier. Es war, als lägen ihre Tränen, immer bereit, vergossen zu werden, schon über ihrem Augapfel. (Z.I.434)

Roth serves the primary impulse of the novel, "das Rätsel des äußeren Lebens zu dechiffrieren" (see above page 121, note 2), by illuminating both the relationship between husband and wife and their social milieu. Chapter IV documents Zipper's attempts "aus einem Proletarier ein Bürger zu werden". (Z.I.438) The scope of realism is not only broadened but deepened to include the portrayal of Zipper's personal history. The childlike naiveté which characterized the narrative perspective of the opening pages is never reattempted. Although the account of Zipper's renting of the "Salon" is given from the perspective of the narrator as a child, the vocabulary and sentence structure reveal the presence of the narrator as an external authority. The narrator highlights the naiveté of his childish judgements:

Dieses "natürlich" habe ich damals nicht begriffen. Warum war es Zipper so natürlich, nicht vom Preis zu sprechen? Ach, was war er doch für ein nobler Mann, der alte Zipper!... (Z.I.442)

The word "noble" has already appeared as the narrator's childish expression of approbation ("Es gab einen außerordentlich noblen Raum in der Wohnung Zipper.") (Z.I.427) Through the development of the narrator from a child to

a mature external authority who is distanced from the situation and thus able to represent it more broadly, Roth effectively prefigures Arnold Zipper's gradual estrangement from contemporary social reality. The content of the novel is thus seen to emerge only in relation to its form,

...so daß der Inhalt nichts ist, als Umschlagen der Form in Inhalt, und die Form nichts als Umschlagen des Inhalts in Form. (1)

In an attempt to redress the balance of the novel, the mature narrator counterpoises the narrow focus on Zipper with a detailed portrayal of Arnold. As a preface to this, he freely acknowledges the limitations of his previous angle of vision:

Bis zu dieser Zeit hatte ich Arnold nur im Schatten seines Vaters und seines Hauses gesehen,... (Z.I.455)

This more distanced narrative perspective enables the narrator to enlarge the scope of realism and to provide the reader with a minute description of the conditions of Arnold's life immediately after the war. The narrator gives a detailed account of the humiliation Arnold was subjected to in his attempts to make a living "von dem Handel mit Militärstoffen" (Z.I.457), and of his abortive attempts to emigrate to Brazil. Immediately after his conversation with Arnold about the failure of his attempt to go to Brazil, the narrator reflects on his friend's fate:

In dieser Nacht fühlte ich das Gesetz der Welt. Ich hörte den geschwinden, genauen, unerbittlichen, reibungslosen Gang der Räder, die den Mechanismus des Schicksals ausmachen. Ich dachte, daß der Sohn des alten Zipper einem unbekannten Gebot untertan war, wie der Alte es gewesen, wie es die Enkel des Alten auch sein würden. (Z.I.465)

(1) Friedrich Hegel, op.cit. p.51

The embodiment of this reflection within the narrative is the formal means of conveying what Adorno considered to be the "wahren Gegenstand" of the novel:

...seit Fieldings Tom Jones, hatte er (der Roman) seinen wahren Gegenstand am Konflikt zwischen den lebendigen Menschen und den versteinerten Verhältnissen. (1)

Once again Roth lays bare "den illusionären Charakter des Dargestellten" (see above page 129, note 2); which rests on the assumption that the recorded acts, encapsulated in the form of the past tense,

belong(s) with a causal chain,...partake(s) of a set of related and orientated actions,... (2)

By re-unifying the succession implied by the inner logic of language into simultaneous experience, Roth seeks to convey a sense of the massive actuality of an essentially alien and mysterious world. Roth undermines from within the fiction all the technical elements of narrative which aim at imposing the image of a stable and coherent universe. The linear development of plot, the product of the narrative tense,

...whose sole function is to unite as rapidly as possible a cause and an end. (3),

is weakened by the fact that Arnold's life is to a large extent merely a re-tracing of his father's. The course of both men's lives is radically altered by circumstances outside their control. For Arnold's father the gambling exploits in Monte Carlo result in a loss of income which

(1) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. pp.64-65

(2) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

(3) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.37

badly damage his career prospects. For Arnold, the outbreak of war means an abrupt end to his professional training. The narrator frequently indicates the similarities between the lives of Arnold Zipper and his father:

Die Liebe zum Theater hatte Arnold, wie manches andere, vom alten Zipper geerbt. War aber der alte Zipper mit Vorliebe zu Operetten gegangen, so zog der junge der Unterhaltung die Kunst vor. Hatte der alte Zipper seine Freikarten den Beziehungen zum Kassierer zu verdanken gehabt, so bekam der junge die Plätze unmittelbar vom Regisseur... (Z.I.475)

The similarity between these two representatives of different generations becomes even more apparent to the narrator when Zipper comes to Berlin to visit his son:

Mir war, als hätte ich die Ähnlichkeit zwischen Vater und Sohn erst in dieser Stunde feststellen können,... Ich bemerkte in Arnolds Angesicht denselben Zug einer verspielten, kindischen Seligkeit, die das Angesicht des Alten so schicksalhaft zeichnete. Nur, daß sie in Arnolds Angesicht von einem traurigen Schleier überweht schien. (Z.I.510)

By highlighting the similarities between the lives of the two Zippers, similarities which transcend the bounds of chronological time, Roth works against the narrative tense which calls for a sequence of events. This rebellion against discursive language from within the medium itself is the means by which Roth focusses on "die metaphysische Dimension" (see above page 121, note 2), on those subliminal areas of human experience which cannot be expressed in a form which implies a series of related actions. The representation of the father's life through the son's effectively halts the chronological flow and opens the way for the representation of a state of mind - the evolution of what de Chirico called metaphysical psychology of things. (1)

(1) Giorgio de Chirico. "Metaphysische Ästhetik" (1919), in: Werner Haftmann. Painting in the Twentieth Century (vol.I), Lund Humphries, London, 1960, p.176

The gradual undermining of the "hierarchy in the realm of facts" (1), encapsulated in the narrative tense, and the corresponding sharpening of the focus on the secondary impulse of the novel, "die Bemühung ums Wesen" (see above page 121, note 2), is represented by Roth in Zipper und sein Vater through his treatment of the motif of the measured flow of time. Roth re-presents in the structure of the novel what Eikhenbaum termed "the constant tension between the unconscious and language...the internal dialectic of art" (see above page 123, note 1), as the tension between temporality and timelessness. In the early part of the novel, Roth underlines the ordered, linear development which constitutes the "Fiktion des Berichts" (see above page 122, note 3) by interspersing the narrative with references to the flow of measured time. The opening chapter contains a long description of Zipper's "Chronometer" - the watch exercises a peculiar fascination on the narrator-as-child and is minutely described:

Denn er nahm es mit der Zeit genau. Er besaß eine Uhr, von der mein Freund mit Recht sagte, sie wäre ein Chronometer. Es war eine große, goldene Uhr mit Deckel. Das Zifferblatt bestand aus lila Emaille. Die schwarzen römischen Ziffern hatten goldene Ränder. Ein unscheinbarer, kaum sichtbarer Haken neben dem Bügel brachte ein Läutewerk in Bewegung. Eine klare, kleine, silberne Glocke schlug die eben verflossenen Stunde und Viertelstunde. (Z.I.426)

The detail of the description reinforces the impression of a carefully structured realm of substantial acts which is conveyed through the medium of the narrative tense: it conveys the sense of the complexity of the unfamiliar,

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

artificial world. The child-like reverence for Zipper's watch re-affirms the thematic architecture of the early part of the novel. The references to a measured order of time reflect a faith in a coherent and stable universe: as the child-narrator loses his innocence, so the certainty and apparent stability of the world he observes are gradually undermined. Through the narrator's description of Zipper's watch, Roth incorporates an image of the world as alien and mysterious into a "pictorial representation of the form of the object". (1)

Manchmal, wenn er am Tisch saß und alle schweigsam aßen, schob er den Riegel an der Uhr, und die Tischgenossen lauschten verwundert dem rätselhaften Klang. (Z.I.426) (my emphasis)

The smooth functioning of Zipper's watch becomes a metaphor for the stability and regularity of his existence:

Er bedurfte ebensowenig eines Arztes wie seine Uhr eines Uhrmachers. (Z.I.427)

Yet the stability and coherence of Zipper's world is undermined in Chapter V by the juxtaposition of the young narrator's expression of the cataclasmic changes which have overtaken the Zipper household with the metaphor of the constancy of the universe Zipper inhabits:

Aber es war außer all dem noch etwas da, der Atem eines Fremden, der Flügelschlag eines unbekannten Fluches... Wir waren alle zerschmettert, als hätten wir soeben erfahren, daß in dieser Nacht die Welt untergehen würde...

...Herr Zipper...sah auf seinen Chronometer und sagte: "Es ist elf Uhr und siebzehn Minuten." (Z.I.443)

References to the measured flow of chronological time become more infrequent as the novel progresses. The outbreak

(1) Carlo Carra, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.177

of war, which forms the subject of Chapter VII, marks the beginning of the gradual disintegration of Zipper's world. This disintegration of what Zipper considered an integral world order is paralleled and highlighted by the fact that he no longer measures his existence against the flow of chronological time, the symbol of a stable world order:

Wie lange war es schon her, seitdem er seinen Chronometer hatte läuten lassen! (Z.I.448)

As the disintegration of his world progresses, the flow of chronological time becomes in the words of Musil's Arnheim

...ein Instrument der Angst...(die Uhr), die ein Ersatz dafür ist, daß unsere Tätigkeiten sich nicht mehr natürlich ablösen. (1)

The narrator observes how Zipper's troubles have left him curiously unmoved:

Der Krieg, der Tod seines jüngeren Sohnes, das Unglück seines älteren -... Sorgen, Schulden und die Beschwerden des Alters hatten ihm nur eine Trauer umgelegt, wie eine Kleidung, wie einen Mantel, den man sich anzieht, weil es draußen kalt ist, nicht weil man selbst friert. (Z.I.507)

Zipper's response to the numerous disasters that have shaken his world is to retreat into a realm of private, subjective time. It is by consciously relating these two different conceptions of time, the flux of time as subjective experience and the flow of chronological time ("Genau eine Minute und zehn Sekunden Verspätung", remarks Zipper") (Z.I.507), that Roth explores the "metaphysische Dimension" (see above page 121, note 2), and alludes "to a higher and more hidden state of being which is the very secret and splendour of art". (2) The close juxtaposition

(1) Robert Musil. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, Rowohlt Verlag, Hamburg, 1956, p.182

(2) Carlo Carrà, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.175

of two different conceptions of time also serves to warn the reader against the coherent line of the narrative which does not aim to explore different dimensions of time, but rather to reduce reality

to a slim and pure logos, without density, without volume, without spread... (1)

This laying bare of the lie of descriptive narrative does not, however, take place at the expense of realism. The acuity of the narrator's observations is justified from within the context of the fiction itself. Having directed his attention in the preceding chapters mainly at Arnold, the narrator admits to the reader:

Aber der Vater war noch eines intensiven Studiums würdig genug! (Z.I.507)

We have already noted how the correspondences between the lives of the two Zippers serve to undermine the flow of chronological time, and to maintain a delicate balance between the two impulses of the novel. Zipper's retreat into a realm of private duration, which is represented by the increasingly infrequent references to chronological time, is paralleled by his son's retreat into a more harmonious realm where the laws of chronology are suspended. The increased emphasis on "die Bemühung ums Wesen" (see above page 121, note 2), does not, however, result in the abandonment of realism as Adorno argued. In one respect, Arnold's visits to the café are part of a routine which is minutely described by a narrator very much aware of the claims of realism: in another respect, they also acquire

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. pp.36-37

a representative significance, - they tell us more about Arnold Zipper. De Chirico encapsulates and expresses this symbolical aspect of the object world in the following terms:

...an inexplicable state X can exist both behind and in front of a painted, described, or imagined thing, but above all within the thing itself. (1)

Placed in the foreground of the description, the object alludes to the "inexplicable state X", forging a new channel for "die Bemühung ums Wesen" (see above page 121, note 2). The café in Zipper und sein Vater, like the stage in some of the work of the artists of "Neue Sachlichkeit", notably Max Beckmann, becomes the symbol of a more harmonious realm. The retreat into an inner world of private duration is spatialized as Arnold and his father's physical retreat into the café. The café represents a new, autonomous reality which is distinct from the "set of related and orientated actions" (see above page 133, note 2) which constitutes the reality encapsulated in and represented by the narrative tense:

Der Raum war halb dunkel. Es war das Dämmerlicht einer Grotte, eines Verschwörerhauses, eines Freimaurersaals. Er erregte meine Phantasie. Trat man aus dem Kaffeehaus in das helle Sonnenlicht, so war es, als wäre man mitten aus einem Traum geweckt worden. Saß man drinnen, so hatte die Zeit aufgehört. (Z.I.444)

Roth incorporates the metaphysical dimension into his minutely realistic portrayal of the café by using the description to represent the spiritual condition of the Zippers: the description forms an image of those subliminal areas of human life: (...so war es, als wäre man

(1) Giorgio de Chirico, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.175

mitten aus einem Traum geweckt worden. ») (Z.I.444)

Roth exposes the "fiction of the report" (see above page 122, note 3) by positing the existence of a realm of subjective experience where the flow of chronological time cedes to the flux of private duration. The image of the clock without hands parodies the narrative tense which serves the primary impulse of the novel, the establishment of the relation of cause and effect which finds its perfect expression in the form of the narrative tense itself:

Die Menschen, die dort saßen, sahen trotzdem jedesmal auf die Uhr, sie bildeten sich wahrscheinlich ein, jetzt wüßten sie die Stunde. Das Ticken, das sie hörten, beruhigte sie offenbar. (Z.I.444) (my emphasis)

In the description of Arnold's visits to the café (Chapter XI), the narrator once again notes how chronological time has ceased to have any meaning for the patrons:

...ohne den regelmäßigen Anblick...der Toilette im Korridor...vor der man, ohne zu merken, wie die Zeit verstrich, eine halbe Stunde stehen konnte; (Z.I.474)

The subtle dialectic of form and content is re-affirmed as the minute description of the café serves not only to fulfill the claims of realism, but also to convey the impression of the massive actuality of a strange, mysterious and artificial world that imposes itself on Arnold Zipper:

Er konnte nicht mehr leben, ohne den regelmäßigen Anblick der kleinen, weißen, runden und der viereckigen, grünen Tische: der dicken Säulen,...an denen Zeitungen hingen wie dürre Früchte in dünnen, gelben, klappernden Rahmen; der dunklen Nischen, beschattet von Überkleidern an schwerbehängten Ständern; (Z.I.474)

The richness of the object world, its curious density, is conveyed by the wealth of adjectives. Roth seeks to convey man's problematic relationship to reality in terms of his

relation to the world of objects. The constantly shifting foundation of Arnold Zipper's relation to the outside world is transferred into the image of the different aspects the café takes on:

Manchmal glich das Kaffeehaus einem Lager überwinternder Nomaden, manchmal einem bürgerlichen Speisezimmer, manchmal einem großen Wartesaal in einem Palast und manchmal einem warmen Himmel für Erfrorene. (Z.I.474-5)

For Arnold, the café represents a new, more harmonious realm which is totally distinct from the world he inhabits during the day:

Erst wenn Arnold dieses Kaffeehaus betrat, war er seinem Tag endgültig entronnen. Hier erst begann seine Freiheit. Denn obwohl die Drehtür sich unaufhörlich bewegte, konnte Arnold doch sicher sein, in diesem Kaffeehaus keinen Menschen zu finden, der ihn an seine Arbeit oder an eine Arbeit überhaupt erinnerte. (Z.I.475)

As in Roth's feuilleton Vernichtung eines Kaffeehauses (1) even the physical dimensions of Arnold's favourite café seem to transcend the bounds of ordinary existence:

Nur dünne, gelbe Vorhänge verhüllten die Straße an den Fenstern. Aber diese Vorhänge waren so dicht, daß man glauben konnte, selbst Steine und Schüsse würden an ihnen zurückprallen. (Z.I.475)

- compare Vernichtung eines Kaffeehauses -

Zwar kannte man das Maß der Säule,...aber gemessen mit jenem Maß, das keine Bezeichnung hat, dennoch vorhanden und unheimlich richtig ist, waren die Säulen unendlich,... (IV.841)

Like the café described in the feuilleton of one year earlier, Arnold Zipper's "Stammcafé" provides its patrons with a supportive sense of constancy in the face of the vicissitudes of existence in the outside world.

(1) Joseph Roth. "Vernichtung eines Kaffeehauses", Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.10.1927, vol.IV, pp.841-3

Like Max Beckmann in Selbstbildnis im Smoking (1927), Roth uses the theatre as an emblem of a new, more stable, carefully constructed reality. The narrator describes how Arnold lives vicariously through the lives of the actors and artists he sees in the theatres and cafés:

Er wollte nur die Luft des Theaters atmen, wie er ins Kaffeehaus kam, nicht um Karten zu spielen, sondern um die Luft des Kaffeehauses zu atmen. (Z.I.475)

He is unable to produce any original works of art himself, and tries to compensate for this by his passionate interest in the lives and works of the artists whom he seeks out:

Aber er konnte nichts hervorbringen. Er lebte wie in einem Angsttraum, wenn man rufen will und nicht kann. Da er so eifrig forschte, wußte er vieles aus dem Privatleben seiner Lieblinge. (Z.I.476)

By exploiting the symbolic value of the theatre and café, Roth highlights "the internal dialectic of art" (see above page 123, note 1): without abandoning his realistic portrayal of the lives of the two Zippers, Roth represents the disorganization of the conventional forms through which the world is perceived by playing upon the rhythmical alternation of temporal progression (encapsulated in the narrative tense), and timeless suspension (the use of café and theatre as symbols). Thus the exposure of what Adorno termed "den illusionären Charakter des Dargestellten" (see above page 129, note 2) does not necessarily entail the rejection of discursive language, as Adorno suggests (1), but depends rather on the exploitation of

(1) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.62

Der Roman müßte sich auf das konzentrieren, was nicht durch den Bericht abzugelten ist. Nur sind ihm im Gegensatz zur Malerei in der Emanzipation vom Gegenstand Grenzen gesetzt durch die Sprache, die ihn weithin zur Fiktion des Berichtes nötigt: konsequent hat Joyce die Rebellion des Romans gegen den Realismus mit einer gegen die diskursive Sprache verbunden.

the tensions inherent in the form of the work itself. The representative function of a symbol implies an essentially static relation between subject and object (1). The portrayal of Arnold Zipper's life becomes the vehicle through which Roth strips away the mask that conceals the true nature of reality. The dichotomy between "Das anti-realistische Moment des...Romans, seine metaphysische Dimension", and "seinem realen Gegenstand" (see above page 121, note 2), posited by Adorno, is thus re-unified. The novel itself becomes a symbolic representation of man's profound dislocation from social reality. As we saw in the earlier section, it was this shift in perspective that constituted the "metaphysische Dimension" for de Chirico:

But suppose that one link in this chain (...the endless rosary made from recollections of our relationships with things...) breaks for a moment, for unexpected reasons independent of our will, and who can tell me how this man, this bird-cage, these books will appear to me? Terror and amazement... Yet the scene itself remains unchanged, I merely see it from a different angle. And here we have arrived at the metaphysical aspect of things. (2) (my emphasis)

It is from within the context of a realistic portrayal of Arnold Zipper's relationship with his wife Erna that Roth

(1) See Hermann Broch on the dual nature of discursive language.

...die Satzodynamik wird einerseits durch das Verbum... zeitlich vorwärtsgetrieben, wird aber andererseits von der Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung auf das Satzinnere beschränkt und ins Statische rückverwandelt, so daß diese Beziehung, obwohl sie von der Verbaldynamik erzeugt ist, sich als eine präsentiert, in der,...das Zeitliche aufgehoben wird, d.h. Subjekt und Objekt in ein Simultan-Verhältnis gesetzt werden.

In: Jürgen Schramke. Zur Theorie des modernen Romans. C.H.Beck, München, 1974, p.135.

(2) Giorgio de Chirico, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.177.

brings into full relief the metaphysical dimension of the novel -, highlighting the individual's profound sense of dislocation from social reality. In an attempt to efface the unintelligibility of the world around him, Arnold Zipper consigns himself to the autonomous, carefully constructed world of the theatre, an image which alludes so closely to reality. This area of Zipper's consciousness is explored by the narrator through Erna:

Das war "die Bühne", die nach Sünde roch, fernen, unbekannten Reichtümern, einem Glanz, der einen Untergang begleitet oder ein großes Glück - beides so fern von allen bürgerlichen Möglichkeiten,... (Z.I.486)

Like the café for Arnold, the theatre for Erna represents a realm which is quite distinct from the banality of everyday life:

Schließlich führte es so weit vom elterlichen Haus weg, von der Mutter, vom Vater, vom eigenen Blut, daß man fast sicher war, nie mehr in die eigene Vergangenheit zurückzufallen. (Z.I.491)

The narrator comments that for Arnold Erna represents a mysterious, more harmonious second reality which is permanently beyond his grasp:

Ich aber ahnte...daß Erna nicht das Auge fürchtete; daß es ihr daran lag, von Arnold deutlich gesehen zu werden, deutlich und unerreichbar, und seine Phantasie zu entzünden durch eine vorgetäuschte Nähe, die auf Distanz nicht zu verzichten brauchte. (Z.I.495)

The alien and mysterious quality of the world Arnold tries to escape is reproduced in the realm of the second reality where he seeks refuge. The illusory quality of the private realm where Arnold seeks refuge is further emphasized by the title of the film in which Arnold's wife Erna appears - "der ewige Schatten". (1)

(1) Compare the section on cinema in Joseph Roth's Der Antichrist, vol.III, pp.380-3

Disaffected by life with his wife, Arnold surrenders the illusory realm of film and theatre for the attractions of the casino - once again he retraces his father's history:

"... - Sie ist mir übrigens ganz gleichgültig."...
"Ich bin nicht mehr verliebt. Wir leben wie ein altes Ehepaar. Ich bin nur zu faul, um mich von ihr zu trennen. Ich habe mich schon so daran gewöhnt, an diesen Spielsaal,..." (Z.I.515-6)

Deprived of his illusions, but still unable to come to terms with an essentially alien and mysterious world, Arnold finally acts out the part of a clown who is continually thwarted in his attempts to play the violin. Eduard P., the remote friend of Arnold and the narrator, describes the young Zipper as follows:

"Er will ein Stück auf der Geige spielen. Aber sobald er spielen will, kommt ein anderer Clown,... Dieser kluge Narr gibt unserem Arnold eine Ohrfeige. Arnold hatte gerade zwei Bogenstriche gemacht. Aber diese zwei Töne,...sind so klar, so himmlisch, daß es jedem Zuhörer leid tut,..." (Z.I.523)

Like the melancholy, yet resigned harlequin of Max Beckmann's Selbstbildnis als Clown (1921), Arnold Zipper is fully aware of the shabbiness and transitoriness of the autonomous realm he has created for himself, but is not prepared to surrender his last refuge.

The illusory nature of the shadowy realm Arnold inhabits is further highlighted by a shift in the narrative perspective. In his conversations with Eduard P., who becomes the embodiment of the subliminal areas of human life, the narrator's attention is drawn to the "romanhaft" quality of Arnold's fate. Eduard P. tells the narrator:

"...Wenn Sie nun ein Romanschriftsteller aus der guten, alten Schule wären, dann hätten Sie einen ausgezeichneten Stoff: Arnolds Leben..." (Z.I.521)

The reference to fiction within the context of the report of Arnold's life posits a second layer of reality. Through the medium of discursive language, "whose sole function is to unite as rapidly as possible a cause and an end.", Roth explodes the idea that reality is reducible "to a slim and pure logos, without density, without volume, without spread,..." (see above page 138, note 1).

Chapter VI.

Rechts und Links

In our examination of Roth's novel Die Flucht ohne Ende we looked at the ways in which Roth re-presented the ideological content of the book: we explored the means through which he penetrated the insufficiency of the values, feelings and ideas through which a necessarily representative figure experienced contemporary society. We saw that by consciously relating two different conceptions of time - the flow of chronological time and time as a private, subjective experience, - Roth effects an aesthetic transformation of social reality and alludes "to a higher and more hidden state of being..." (1) This re-moulding, this re-presentation of social reality as a determinate form is the starting point from which Roth exposes the ideological myth of a coherent and stable universe. Our examination of the two earlier novels, Die Flucht ohne Ende (1927), and Zipper und sein Vater (1928), isolated two principles which distanced the novels from ideology and revealed the essential unintelligibility of social reality. These two principles were Roth's treatment of the theme of time, and his exposure of the very factitiousness of his fiction. By his frequent references to fiction within fiction, of the type found on (F.E.I.330) (Diese Frau war wie aus Büchern gestiegen, ihrer literarisch bekräftigten Existenz ergab er sich...), Roth draws the reader's attention to

(1) Carlo Carrà, in: Werner Haftmann. Painting in the Twentieth Century, Lund Humphries, London, 1960, p.175

the operations of the fiction itself, - but this is merely to prepare him for the unmasking of the primary act of deception, the exposure of the falsity of the values and beliefs which inform Tunda's view of the world. It is precisely by means of this "aesthetic transformation" that Marcuse considers that the novel can act as a force for personal liberation:

...art can represent, by virtue of the aesthetic transformation, the prevailing unfreedom, in the exemplary fate of individuals, thus breaking through the mystified (and petrified) social reality, and opening the horizon for change (liberation). (1)

By continually undermining the concept of fiction, and by re-presenting the events of the novel as a continual present, Roth seeks to re-instate the novel as "the receptacle of existence in all its density and no longer of its meaning alone." (2) Marcuse's "petrified" and "mystified" society is re-translated into a continual flux of possibilities. It is interesting to note how T.S. Eliot relates "opening the horizon for change" to the disintegration of the conception of time in terms of mere chronology:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation. (3)

In Rechts und Links, as in the two earlier novels Die

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- (1) Herbert Marcuse. The Aesthetic Dimension, Macmillan, London, 1979, Preface, xi.
 - (2) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero (trans. A.Lavers and C.Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.38
 - (3) T.S. Eliot. Four Quartets. Burnt Norton, I. 11. 1-8. Faber Paperbacks, London, 1976, p.13

Flucht ohne Ende (1927) and Zipper und sein Vater (1928), it is the disorganization of the conventional forms through which the world is perceived - initiated from within the novels themselves - that results in a new way of seeing the social order: its essentially alien and mysterious nature is finally unmasked.

Our analysis of Rechts und Links will attempt to explore and explain the sets of relations, or oppositions, between the different elements of the composition of the novel. It is the conflict in meaning which arises from these disparities that

reveals the inscription of an otherness in the work, through which it maintains a relationship with that which it is not, that which happens at its margins. (1)

As we saw in the section on Die Flucht ohne Ende, it was precisely this radical shift in perspective that de Chirico aimed to convey in his art:

But suppose that one link in this chain ("the endless rosary made from recollections of our relationships with things") breaks for a moment, for unexpected reasons independent of our will, and who can tell me how this man, this bird-cage, these books will appear to me? Terror and amazement... Yet the scene itself remains unchanged, I merely see it from a different angle. And here we have arrived at the metaphysical aspect of things. (2)

It is through a similar shift in perspective that Roth tries to present the "metaphysical aspect" of human experience. As we saw in the section on Zipper und sein Vater, the "metaphysische Dimension" (3), the subliminal areas

(1) Pierre Machery. A Theory of Literary Production (trans. G.Wall), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p.79

(2) Giorgio de Chirico, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.177

(3) T.W. Adorno. Noten zur Literatur. I., Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1965, p.65

of human experience cannot be expressed in a form which implies "a set of related and orientated actions." (1) - viz. the narrative tense. Through his depiction of Paul Bernheim's encounter with Nikita, Roth effectively breaks the link in the chain and disrupts the linear development of plot: without abandoning the narrative tense, "the unreal time of cosmogonies, myths, history and novels." (2), Roth, merely by "seeing things from a different angle" (see above page 149, note 2), distances Bernheim from his own history. It is this radical shift in perspective that constitutes the structure of the work. It is the device through which the novel is set against itself from the start. Bernheim's encounter with Nikita dislocates the narrative flow and undermines the conception of a stable and coherent universe which is implicit in the form of the narrative tense, in the continual unravelling of a linear plot ("the endless rosary made from recollections of our relationships with things.") (my emphasis) (see above page 149, note 2). In Machery's terms, this "caesura" (3) is the stylistic device through which the novel corresponds to a reality which is also incomplete, disrupted. Yet the preliminaries for this shift in perspective are set into the flow of the preceding narrative. The narrator documents how Bernheim, having been forced to leave the cavalry, becomes an embittered opponent of the war.

Er aber wurde fast in der Stunde, in der er die Dragoner verließ, ein erbitterter Kriegsgegner. (R.L.I.549)

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

(2) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

(3) Pierre Machery, op.cit. p.79

The narrator comments on Bernheim's abrupt change of allegiance:

Verworren sind in den Herzen und Hirnen der Menschen
Überzeugung und Leidenschaften, und es gibt keine
psychologische Konsequenz. (R.L.I.550)

The unity of the novel is thus preserved by the fact that the formal dislocation brought about by Bernheim's encounter with Nikita is pre-figured in the plot.

Paul's encounter with Nikita wrests him from the secure social context which has been minutely described by the narrator in the earlier chapter:

Immerhin hatte dieses Ereignis ihn aus der Sicherheit gebracht, in der er gelebt hatte. (R.L.I.552)

This sudden disintegration of what he had always considered to be an integral world order results in Bernheim's retreat into a world of private duration. He abandons the concerns which determined his position in society:

Er kümmerte sich nicht mehr um seine Freunde, ihre Zeitungen, ihre Reden. Er desertierte aus ihrem Lager, wie er einst zu ihnen desertiert war. (R.L.I.552)

The narrator's gloss on this (So vielfältig und unbegreiflich ist der Mensch (R.L.I.552)) re-affirms the dialectical relationship between form and content: the diversification of narrative perspectives which becomes apparent in the breakdown of the measured narration which characterized the preceding chapters, and the introduction of an impressionistic chapter which seeks to penetrate the psychological condition of Paul Bernheim, is underpinned by reference to the manifold nature of individual psychology.

Bernheim's journey to the front is a metaphor for his

temporary dislocation from his past. Paul's estrangement from what is presented as social reality in the novel is conveyed by the means of expression. The loose sentence structure, the absence of predicates, symbols of the relationships between objects that impose meaning on the whole, reflects Paul's experience of the world as lacking in essential unity:

Dann sah er den grauen Vorhang des Novemberregens... und hinter dem Vorhang kleine Dörfer, verlassene und zerstreute Gehöfte, Frauen mit den Rockschoßen über den Köpfen, schwarze Juden in langen Gewändern, gelbe Stoppelfelder und gelbe, gewundene Straßen, deren schwarzer Schlamm durch den Regen schimmerte, aufrechte und geknickte Telegraphenstangen, Feldküchen, verloren und halbversunken im Kot,... (R.L.I.553-4)

Bernheim's temporary dislocation from his habitual social context throws it in a new light: its essential mysteriousness is finally unmasked:

So ratlos sah er sich dem Frieden entgegentreten, seinem Haus, seiner Mutter, der Bank, dem Dienstpersonal und den Beamten. Wenn er sich erinnerte, daß er noch vor gar nicht langer Zeit flammende Proteste gegen den Krieg geschrieben und geredet hatte, so verstand er die vergangenen Monate und Jahre nicht mehr. Sie lagen unbegreiflich hinter dem schrecklichen Erlebnis mit Nikita,... (R.L.I.554)

The replacement of the narrative tense by the present tense, which is used to convey Paul's reflection on the incident with Nikita, becomes the stylistic expression of his temporary retreat into a realm of private duration, where succession is re-unified into simultaneous experience.

Although Bernheim feels for the first time that he has some control over his own life (Mein Leben...halte ich jetzt selbst in der Hand,... (R.L.I.554)), it becomes obvious that Paul's experience of the world as a

simultaneous present entails the paralysis of all decisive action. Paul's reflections and feelings become a substitute for action. The description of his empathy with "den kleinsten, geringfügigsten, leblosen Wesen,..." (R.L.I.555) is the means through which the narrator emphasizes his extreme passivity:

Und in dieser bleiernen Gleichgültigkeit gingen Pauls Kümernisse zeitweilig unter. Er fühlte sich eins mit irgendeinem der wehrlosen Gegenstände...die dem Regen preisgegeben waren,...einem Strohalm...der ohne Willen dalag und sein Ende erwartete, in voller Glückseligkeit eigentlich, insofern er Glück zu empfinden imstande gewesen wäre. Ein Bach konnte ihn mitnehmen und davontragen, ein Stiefel ihn zertreten. (R.L.I.555)

He renounces control over his personal destiny by consigning himself to the power of an inevitable fate:

Also empfand Paul zum erstenmal den Krieg, und wie die Millionen eingerückter Männer fühlte er den erhabenen Gleichmut derer, die sich blind einem blinden Schicksal unterwerfen. (R.L.I.555)

The image of death functions in the same way in Rechts und Links as it does in Die Flucht ohne Ende - it becomes the symbol of the renunciation of individual responsibilities:

...kam er sich...wie ein Toter vor,... Weit hinter ihm lagen die Sorgen und Freuden, die Ängste und die Hoffnungen des Lebens. Er war ihnen allen entflohen. Es gab für einen Flüchtling wie ihn kein ruhigeres Ziel, keinen sichereren Zufluchtsort als die Front und den Tod. (R.L.I.555)

Bernheim's encounter with Nikita has dislocated him from his past life and has opened up a new perspective on that realm. The vehicle through which the naiveté of Bernheim's illusions about his past are revealed is the duality of narrative perspective. As we have seen, the narrator temporarily abandons his role as "raunenden Beschwörer des

Imperfekts" (1) and cedes to the present tense, which directly conveys Bernheim's thoughts and emotions. The distance between the narrator and Bernheim is re-established later, and the reader is provoked to reflect critically on Paul's history. The narrator comments on Paul's jealousy of his brother.

In dieser Stimmung übertrieb er den Reichtum, die Dauer und die Fülle seiner vergangenen Jahre.
(R.L.I.555) (my emphasis)

This sentence effectively invites the reader to retrace Bernheim's history as it is presented to him. It undermines the authority of the narrative tense as the vehicle through which a stable and coherent world is presented. The reader is urged to re-examine the operations of the narrative in relation to its content. By questioning the "reality" of what has been presented (...übertrieb er den Reichtum,... (R.L.I.555)) (my emphasis), and by interrupting the narrative flow and introducing another temporal dimension, Roth constructs an interpretative framework through which the reader can reflect critically on what is presented to him. Roth allows us to look behind the mask, he alerts us to the distortions of the "real". The breaking of the link in the chain, to use de Chirico's terminology once again, which results from the establishment of a relation of temporal opposites in the novel,

reveals the inscription of an otherness in the work, through which it maintains a relationship with that which it is not. (2)

(1) Thomas Mann. Der Zauberberg. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, vol.I, p.1

(2) Pierre Machery, op.cit. p.79

The novel's meaning arises from the continual process of recreating, of reframing its content: only in this way can it give us access to

a world...which has been sent sprawling before us, for us to take or leave. (1)

However, as de Chirico noted -

Yet the scene itself remains unchanged. -
(see above page 149, note 2)

and the radical shift in perspective does not necessarily disrupt the formal unity of the work. It is by establishing another layer of opposition within the novel itself that Roth undermines the "Fassade", the "Täuschungsgeschäft" of the work, without totally abandoning the realist tradition. (2) The motif of Paul Bernheim's journey to the ends of the earth is the stylistic means through which Roth rounds on the narrative tense which presents "a past without substance; purged of the uncertainty of existence,..." (3) Like Franz Tunda's "Flucht ohne Ende", Paul Bernheim's journey is symbolic in Thomas Mann's terms.

Wir wollen es so stellen: Ein geistiger, das heißt ein bedeutender Gegenstand ist eben dadurch "bedeutend", daß er über sich hinausweist, daß er Ausdruck und Exponent eines Geistig-Allgemeineren ist, einer ganzen Gefühls- und Gesinnungswelt, welche in ihm ihr mehr oder weniger vollkommenes Sinnbild gefunden hat, - wonach sich denn der Grad seiner Bedeutung bemißt. Ferner ist die Liebe zu einem solchen Gegenstand ebenfalls und selbst "bedeutend". Sie sagt etwas aus über den, der sie hegt, sie kennzeichnet sein Verhältnis zu jenem Allgemeinen, jener Welt, die der Gegenstand vertritt und die^m ihm, bewußt oder unbewußt, mitgeliebt wird. (4)

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

(2) T.W. Adorno, op.cit. p.64

(3) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.37

(4) Thomas Mann, op.cit. vol.2, p.689

Paul's journey away from all that is familiar to him is the analogue (within the context of the realist tradition) of what Roth urges the reader to do by establishing a set of relations between the different elements of the composition of the novel: it becomes the symbol of the reader's gradual movement away from an unquestioning acceptance of what is presented to him in the narrative tense.

Yet Paul's journey merely leads him back to his starting point. The injuries he received at the front reawaken his desire to live:

Zwischen der Stille, die in diesem Spital herrschte,... und Pauls wacher, warmer und hochmütiger Sehnsucht nach dem Leben war der Unterschied so groß wie zwischen krank und gesund. (R.L.I.558)

The certainty and confidence which characterized the earlier part of Paul's existence are completely restored:

Er glaubte mit allen Kräften, daß er am Leben bleiben würde,... (R.L.I.557)

Paul's encounters at the front have left him essentially unchanged. The narrator comments:

Er wurde wieder der alte Paul Bernheim. (R.L.I.557)

As if to reaffirm Paul's assumption of his old identity, the narrator remarks wryly at the end of chapter IV:

...es ist nicht wahr, daß Leiden, Gefahren, Nähe des Todes einen Menschen ändern. Paul Bernheim konnten sie nichts anhaben. (R.L.I.558)

The "new" Paul Bernheim sees in the events which have overtaken him only further confirmation of his cherished ideas.

Mit einem leisen, allerdings sehr verborgenen Stolz dachte er noch daran, daß England, sein England, gesiegt hatte. Es war, als hätte die Weltgeschichte der Anglomanie Bernheims recht gegeben,... (R.L.I.559)

Paul erases the experiences at the front from his memory and returns home to fulfil his old aspirations:

Und als wäre er nie ein Kriegsgegner gewesen und als hätte er niemals das Leben dem Tod im Felde vorgezogen und England seinem Vaterland, begann er, konservativ und patriotisch zu denken, und schon sah er sich Abgeordneter und Minister werden. (R.L.I.559)

The journey - a flight which leads back to its starting point - denies its initial impulse and functions within the novel as a metaphor for the contradictions inherent in the values, ideas and feelings of contemporary society. The motif of the journey is in fact central to the structure of the work. Each set of values which is posited by the minute description of the narrator is undermined by a succeeding set, in a continual train of events which moves forward towards its cancellation. In the opening pages of the novel, the narrator describes how the foundations of the preceding generation are literally undermined, and replaced by a new and gleaming edifice which becomes the symbol of the aspirations of the succeeding generation:

Im Garten wurden die alten Bäume umgelegt. Man hörte, wie sie splitterten und krachten... Die Mauer fiel... sahen die Leute den kahl gewordenen Garten der Bernheims, das gelbe Haus, der brütenden Leere preisgegeben,... Einige Monate später stand an der Stelle des alten, gelben, giebligen Hauses ein neues, weißes, strahlendes, mit einem steinernen Balkon,... (R.L.I.532)

The death of Felix Bernheim is succeeded by the erosion of the values and aspirations of his generation: this too is expressed by the description of the gradual erosion of material comfort in the Bernheim family home. Paul returns from the front to find a marked deterioration in his family's circumstances:

Ein eisiger, wüster Hauch lag über den Möbeln, den Teppichen und an den Fenstern aller Zimmer. (R.L.I.572)

His mother informs him of their straitened circumstances:

"... Wir müssen uns einschränken, Paul!..." (R.L.I.573)

The internal logic of the novel, the subtle orchestration of the dissonances within the work, is a function of the way in which the novel works upon and re-presents the values and feelings of the Bernheim family type so as to reveal the gaps and inconsistencies in their view of the world. The dialectical "Umschlagen" which for Hegel constituted the relationship between form and content (1) also relates to some extent to the relationship of the novel to the values and feelings of the contemporary society which inform its content. The process of positing a series of relations, and of dislocating them in turn is a function of the nature of the values and feelings, which exercise a reciprocal influence on the structure of the text, as indeed they are represented by it. It is in the nature of these values and ideas "to cast the shadow of (their) absence over the perception of (their) presence." (2) The gaps, the dislocations in the fabric of the novel itself correspond then to the absences and deficiencies in the values and ideas which are the foundation of its discourse. We referred earlier to the meaning of the novel as a continual process of recreating, of reframing its content. The meaning of the novel can only be grasped in terms of the continual reciprocal relationship of the text

(1) Friedrich Hegel. Enzyklopädie, para.133, in: Georg Lukács. Essays über Realismus (collected works vol.4), Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied/Berlin, 1971, p.51

(2) Terry Eagleton. Criticism and Ideology, NLB, London, 1976, p.69

on the ideas and beliefs of contemporary society, and of these ideas and beliefs on the text. The reason for this lies in the fact that the novel is unable to "transcend" the values, beliefs and ideas of the society which produced it. These ideas, viewed from within, have no outside. Just as ideology itself retains elements of the "real" in its re-production of it, so the novel can penetrate the "truth" of these ideas and beliefs by alluding to the absences, the unsayables. As the novel holds the key to the true nature of contemporary ideas and beliefs by alluding to the flaws and absences in them, so de Chirico claims that the object can cast the reflection of their absence over the perception of their presence and so surrender its innermost truths:

...an inexplicable state X can exist both behind and in front of a painted, described, or imagined thing, but above all within the thing itself. (1)

As it is impossible to "transcend" ideology, the novel continually moves across the wider basis of ideas and beliefs, but never beyond them. Terry Eagleton expresses this point in terms which remind us of Paul Bernheim's circuitous journey, and indeed of Franz Tunda's "Flucht ohne Ende":

To travel indefinitely along any one track of ideological meaning is not to encounter an ultimate threshold of articulation but to describe an arc which returns one inexorably to one's starting point. (2)

Bernheim's circular journey becomes a metaphor for the

(1) Giorgio de Chirico, in: Werner Haftmann, op.cit. p.175

(2) Terry Eagleton, op.cit. p.96

relationship of the novel to the ideas and values which it represents.

The close reciprocal relationship between the values and feelings of contemporary society and the text's formal aesthetic operations which we described and illustrated above, is reflected in the treatment of the theme of time in the novel. In a sense the process of conflict and resolution between the different structural elements of the novel can be said to coincide in time. We saw how the ideas and values of the Bernheim family, encapsulated and expressed in terms of their material wealth, were undermined by succeeding generations. Yet each set of values is both a product of the values which preceded it, and a producer of the values which succeed it: the conflict with the past becomes most acute at the moment when a new set of values is erected. This can be illustrated by the reactions of the onlookers when Felix Bernheim tears down his father's houses to build a new one:

...sahen die Leute den kahl gewordenen Garten...das gelbe Haus, der brütenden Leere preisgegeben, und ein Unmut erfaßte sie, als wären es ihr Haus und ihre Bäume gewesen. (R.L.I.532)

This synchronic element of the process of conflict and resolution, the subsumption of the past in the present, is also apparent in chapter XVIII of the novel. The narrator comments on Carl Ender's hypocrisy in matters of taste by commenting:

Ohne Zweifel hätten ihm jene Zwerge aus Ton besser gefallen, die im Garten des alten Bernheimschen Hauses standen. Aber er wäre bereit gewesen, sie mitleidig zu verachten. (R.L.I.674)

As we saw in the two earlier novels, Die Flucht ohne Ende and Zipper und sein Vater, the suspension of a clear line of chronological development undermines one of the primary conventions of the novel, which seeks to reduce its reproduction of reality to a moment in time, or to a series of acts in time. In Rechts und Links Roth once again uses the image of the clock which has stopped to convey the experience of existence in its simultaneity, "eine ganz bestimmte Vorläufigkeit, die kein Ende hat." (F.E.I.355)

As we saw in Zipper und sein Vater, the disintegration of what had been considered an integral, stable world order, encapsulated in the narrative tense, is paralleled and highlighted by an image of the breakdown of all ordered temporal progression. Paul returns after the mysterious encounter with Nikita, which so radically altered his view of the world, to find profound changes in his family home:

Von den vielen Uhren, die Herr Felix Bernheim in sein umgebautes Haus gebracht hatte - ...denn er hatte eine Schwäche für Uhren und einen Sinn für den Wert der Zeit -, ging jetzt nur eine... Und aus den weißen und silbernen, zwecklos gewordenen Zifferblättern und von den Zeigern, die seit Jahren die gleiche, erstarrte Stunde wiesen, ging ein unheimliches Schweigen aus und strich durch die frostige Leere der Räume.
(R.L.I.572)

As in the earlier novel, the strongly developed sense of the flow of chronological time becomes a metaphor for the stability and regularity of the existence of the older generation, a sense of security which is completely undermined in the succeeding generation. The stable and coherent routines of Paul Bernheim's youth, which "partake of a set of related and orientated actions,..." (1) cede to a state

(1) Roland Barthes, op.cit. p.36

of timeless suspension:

Alles war neu und unbenützt. Die Politur blinkte wie **am ersten Tag. Die Teppiche schienen keinen Staub** aufzufangen. Mehrere hatte Frau Bernheim übrigens **einrollen lassen und in die Winkel gestellt. Dort** lehnten sie gewichtig und sicher und dennoch wie in der Erwartung, von irgend jemandem abgeholt zu werden. (R.L.I.572)

The curious richness and density of the object world becomes at once both a metaphor for Paul Bernheim's new relationship to social reality and a visual representation of the relationship between the different structural elements of the novel. It is an abrupt change in material circumstances which snatches the objects in the Bernheim home out of their normal context and makes us view them in a new light: similarly, Paul's encounter with Nikita wrests him out of his usual social context and leads him and the reader to view the "reality" presented in the novel in a different light. But once again "...the scene itself remains unchanged,..." (see above page 149, note 2). The new perspective does not immediately supplant the old: its true meaning emerges through a set of oppositions. The stability and coherence of the old order is preserved in the adjectives "gewichtig" and "sicher" - yet this certainty is suspended, like the flow of chronological time, as the past is re-cast in the present. For as we have seen "If all time is eternally present/ All time is unredeemable." (see above page 148, note 3). The synchronic element of the process of conflict and resolution is thus represented in the form of the description of the Bernheim home.

Roth also works against the narrative tense which calls

for a sequence of events by highlighting the similarities between the lives of Paul Bernheim and his father, similarities which transcend the bounds of chronological time. The course of both men's lives was dramatically altered by circumstances outside their control. In the opening paragraph of the novel, the narrator documents Felix Bernheim's sudden change in fortune:

Sein ungewöhnliches Glück erweckte ihren Neid. Als hätte es das Schicksal darauf abgesehen, sie vollends zur Verzweiflung zu bringen, bescherte es ihm eines Tages einen Haupttreffer. (R.L.I.531)

The course of Paul's life, as we have already seen, was similarly radically altered by his unexpected meeting with Nikita. His relationship with Brandeis ensured his financial stability and enabled him to secure his materially comfortable existence by marrying into a rich family. The similarities between the lives of the two men highlight the contrasts. Both Paul and his father fall in love with an acrobat and an actress - both members of what was regarded as a socially inferior caste. The narrator highlights their different reactions to a similar situation:

Es war vielleicht die einzige mutige Tat, die Felix Bernheim in seinem Leben gewagt hatte. Später, als sein Sohn Paul eine ähnliche hätte wagen können, dachte ich an die des Vaters, und es wurde mir wieder an einem Beispiel klar, wie die Tapferkeit sich im Ablauf der Geschlechter erschöpft und um wieviel schwächer die Söhne sind, als die Väter waren. (R.L.I.538)

Paul also realizes that his father would have behaved differently:

Und er dachte: Mein Vater wäre hingefahren, mein Vater wäre hingefahren. (R.L.I.687)

By playing on the discrepancies in attitude towards a

similar situation, Roth re-presents the values and ideas of the Bernheim family so as to reveal their gaps and inconsistencies. The similarities between the two generations "cast the shadow of their absence over the perception of their presence" (see above page 158, note 2), and reveal the flaws in the values and attitudes of the Bernheims.

In Selbstverriß (1), a short article on his novel Rechts und Links, Roth asserted that it had been his intention to present the reader with an image of contemporary society:

Ich habe dem Menschen der Gegenwart sein eigenes Bild vorgehalten. (IV.242)

He aims to highlight the gaps and deficiencies of the society of his day by alluding to them in the gaps and dislocations in the fabric of the novel itself:

Ich aber bestrebe mich...im Leser ein gewisses Gefühl der Langeweile zu erzeugen, die eine notwendige Konsequenz sprachlicher Sorgfalt ist, und der Bemühung, die Hohlheit der Gegenwart nicht etwa konvex aufzuzeichnen,⁺) die Substanzlosigkeit unserer Zeitgenossen nicht etwa als "Tragik" oder "Dämonie" darzustellen, sondern die banale Trostlosigkeit dieser Welt präzise widerzuspiegeln. (IV.242) (⁺)my emphasis)

In the same article Roth explicitly rejects the hallmarks of the traditional 19th century novel:

Setzt man ihm zum Beispiel einen "Roman" vor, so soll es auch ein Roman sein, mit "Charakteren", "Psychologie", "Spannung", einem Anfang und einem Schluß. Nun: mein Roman Rechts und Links leugnet ...die Existenz von Charakteren, das heißt von Gestalten mit einer konsequenten Psychology. (IV.241)

As we have already seen, it is by emphasizing the contradictions, the lack of "Konsequenz" (IV.242) between the

(1) Joseph Roth. "Selbstverriß", Die Literarische Welt, 22.11.1929, vol.IV., pp.240-2

various elements of the novel that Roth conveys the impression of the essentially alien and mysterious nature of contemporary society. Roth characterizes contemporary society by reference to its absences - he talks in Selbstverriß of "die Hohlheit der Gegenwart" and of "die Substanzlosigkeit unserer Zeitgenossen" (IV.242). It is by subtly orchestrating the dissonances within the work that Roth sets the novel against itself, undermining the narrative flow which encapsulates a view of the world as stable and coherent. This disjuncture, this structural caesura is a re-presentation of the lacunae in the values and feelings which are the basis of its discourse. To present "die Substanzlosigkeit unserer Zeitgenossen" as "Tragik", or as "Dämonie" (IV.242) -

...is only a way of assembling human misfortune, of subsuming it, and thus of justifying it by putting it into the form of a necessity, of a kind of wisdom, or of a purification. (1)

To subsume "human misfortune" would entail lending definite form and substance to a sprawling and unintelligible reality, and thus it would totally mislead the reader as to the true nature of his condition.

Roth further illustrates "die Hohlheit der Gegenwart" (IV.242) by using the motif of the portrait. Confronted by the portrait of his father on his return to the family home, Paul attempts to recapture the true nature of "der einzigen Kraft und Wärme dieser Familie..." (R.L.I.573):

Paul versuchte hinter dem ziemlich mißlungenen und

(1) Roland Barthes, in: Alain Robbe-Grillet. Snapshots and Towards a New Novel (trans. B.Wright), Calder and Boyars, London, 1965, p.75

nur die repräsentative Oberfläche der Physiognomie **enthaltenden Porträt das wirkliche Angesicht seines Vaters zu finden.** Es gelang ihm nicht mehr. (R.L.I.573)

The gulf which separated the two generations is made clear. Paul, profoundly dislocated from his past, is unable to re-create a complete and harmonious image of his father. The stability and coherence which Paul attributes to his father's generation is undermined by a striking image:

Es konnte auch gar nichts nützen, etwa die Gruft zu öffnen. Das Antlitz seines Vaters bestand jetzt aus tausend Löchern, es war Behausung und Nahrung der Würmer geworden. (R.L.I.573)

The gradual erosion of values and beliefs which originated in the previous generation is re-translated into the image of Felix Bernheim's physical degeneration after death.

Paul Bernheim is unable to come to terms with the deficiencies in the values and beliefs of the society of which he is a representative. Bernheim, like Franz Tunda, chooses to put his faith in an illusory world of his own making. The coherence of the novel is maintained by the fact that the narrator documents his choice:

Man liebt nicht die Frauen, man liebt die Welten, die sie repräsentieren... Er war so glücklich über den Eintritt einer Geschichte in seine Wirklichkeit, daß er jene noch erweiterte und diese vernachlässigte. (R.L.I.668)

"Die Hohlheit der Gegenwart" (IV.242) becomes a personal reality for Paul Bernheim as he approaches his thirtieth birthday. Bernheim is unable to come to terms with the mediocrity of his existence:

Er konnte sich nur Größe oder Tod vorstellen, wenn er an seine Zukunft dachte. Und je strahlender er sich die Größe ausmalte, desto mehr Angst hatte er vor dem Tod. Die Leere des Todes umgab und erfüllte ihn bereits in manchen Stunden. (R.L.I.578)

As a representative of a typological turning point, Paul, like both Arnold Zipper and Franz Tunda, attempts to create for himself a world which provides him with a supportive sense of constancy in the face of the vicissitudes of existence in the outside world. The narrator describes the lengths to which Paul goes to escape the fear of death:

Um ihr zu entfliehen, umgab er sich mit Gesellschaft. Es waren Menschen, die von ihm lebten, Schatten, aufgestiegen aus den Nebeln der Zeit und von ihnen gebildet. Alle bewegten sich auf den ungewissen, ... Gebiet zwischen der Kunst und dem Hasardspiel. Sie hingen mit dem Theater, mit der Malerei, mit der Literatur zusammen, aber sie schrieben nicht, malten nicht, traten nicht auf. (R.L.I.578)

The "Substanzlosigkeit unserer Zeitgenossen" (IV.242) which Roth wants to expose in Rechts und Links is incorporated into the form of the image of Paul's contemporaries as "Schatten". In the description of Bernheim's circle Roth suspends chronological progression, which, as we saw earlier, is a metaphor for a stable and coherent reality. Bernheim's acquaintances are

...Menschen...aufgestiegen aus den Nebeln der Zeit und von ihnen gebildet. (R.L.I.578)

As we saw in the earlier novel, Die Flucht ohne Ende, the experience of existence in its simultaneity entails the paralysis of all action. The "artists" among Bernheim's associates are unable to create. Paul Bernheim is unable to accept the realities of his life:

Er ergab sich der Illusion, endlich das Leben eines wirklichen Herrn zu führen. (R.L.I.579)

Paul's inability to see through the falsity of his ideas and beliefs, to come to terms with "der Hohlheit der

Gegenwart" (IV.242), is expressed through the theme of the suspension of the measured progression of chronological time. The suspension of temporal progression becomes a metaphor for Bernheim's inability to progress beyond the ideas and beliefs which he finds so persuasive. The encounter with Nikita which temporarily dislocated him from his past life causes Paul to continually move across the wider basis of the ideas and beliefs of his class, and leads him inexorably back to his starting point, his father's generation. After documenting Paul's surrender to his illusions, the narrator comments:

Und wie dereinst sein Vater, so kaufte er jetzt
seine Anzüge, seine Schuhe, seine Hüte in England.
(R.L.I.579)

Paul's reaction to "die banale Trostlosigkeit" (IV.242) of his world is to subsume the past in the present:

Paul ließ seine Finger ihrer eigenen Erinnerung
gehörchen und unkontrolliert über die Tasten gehn...
Paul erinnerte sich an die Morgenstunden seiner
Kindheit, an die Stunde vor dem Schulbesuch,...
(R.L.I.581)

The process of conflict and resolution which both characterizes Paul's experience of the world and the relationship between the different structural elements of the novel is synchronic and thus reflects the dialectical relationship of the novel to the ideas and beliefs which form the basis of its discourse.

Paul devotes himself entirely to his illusions, and is unwilling to surrender them even when he suspects their falsity. As Paul leaves the restaurant with his friend Dr. König the narrator comments:

Er gebot der Vernunft, die ihm die Lächerlichkeit **der ganzen Maskerade enthüllen wollte, zu schweigen.** Er ging dem Glück entgegen. Er wollte nicht geweckt werden. (R.L.I.595)

Unable to face the isolation which he experiences at home, Paul suggests they go to a gambling club. The falsity of Bernheim's illusions is undermined from within the motif of the gambling club. Unlike Arnold Zipper, who is immediately able to forget the cares which plague his day to day existence as he enters his habitual café haunt, Paul Bernheim is unable to retreat into a harmonious realm of his own making, and is continually assailed by impecunious acquaintances:

Mit welcher Leidenschaft hätte er spielen können, wenn statt dieser armen Filmstatisten, Vortragskünstler, Artikelschreiber und anderer Zufallsverdiener lauter reiche Herren an den Tischen säßen, wie in England! Hier stürmten ihm bei seinem Eintritt seine Freunde entgegen und baten ihn um Darlehen. (R.L.I.596)

It is by introducing the figure of Nikolai Brandeis that Roth further highlights the essential instability of Bernheim's world. It is Brandeis who articulates Paul's sense of the futility of human life, as he looks at the pictures of the unidentified dead in the police station:

"...Hätten Sie gedacht, daß so viele sterben, nach denen kein Hahn kräht? Danach können Sie berechnen, wie viele von dieser Art leben und noch nicht gestorben sind. Sie torkeln so auf den breiten Landstraßen dahin, hinter ihnen der Tod, hinter ihnen der Tod..." (R.L.I.597)

Bernheim's meeting with Brandeis in the police station once again makes him aware of the weaknesses in his position. As Paul is unable to pass beyond his own values and beliefs, it is left to the narrator to comment:

Je mächtiger ihm Brandeis erschien, desto schwächer kam er sich selbst vor. (R.L.I.598)

For a brief time Paul Bernheim is able to piece together the realities of contemporary society - yet this brief moment of insight is immediately followed by a desire to re-enter the comfortable realm of illusion:

Es gab irgendeinen Zusammenhang zwischen diesem Platz und den Bildern der unbekannten Toten im Polizeigebäude. Als wäre die Untergrundbahn an dieser Stelle nicht ein Verkehrsmittel, sondern eine unterirdische, warme, schützende Zufluchtsstation, lief er die Stiegen hinunter. (R.L.I.599)

It is the enigmatic figure of Nikolai Brandeis who precipitates every new crisis Paul Bernheim undergoes; through him Roth continually lays bare the flaws and dissonances which characterize Paul's view of the world. Just as Roth highlights the similarities between the two generations of Bernheims to reveal the gaps and inconsistencies in their views of the world, so he reconstructs the essential and significant differences between Paul Bernheim and Brandeis in the language of identity. In the brief outline of Brandeis' biography, certain similarities with the life of Paul Bernheim begin to emerge. Like Paul's, Nikolai Brandeis' university career was interrupted by a war: like Paul, he was attracted to the army as it seemed a safe alternative in the face of the vicissitudes of the outside world. Brandeis, again like Paul, engaged in military activity through the whole range of the political spectrum:

Er kämpfte gegen die Bolschewiken, wurde von ihnen gefangen und ging zu ihnen über. (R.L.I.606)

As we have already seen, Paul also rapidly changes his allegiance.

Er aber wurde fast in der Stunde, in der er die Dragoner verließ, ein erbitterter Kriegsgegner. (R.L.I.549)

Like Paul, Brandeis undergoes an experience which dislocates him from his past life and causes him to change his opinions:

Auch Nikolai Brandeis machte die Erfahrung, daß der Mensch in einer einzigen Stunde - die ihm gar nicht wichtig erscheint - imstande ist, was man seinen "Charakter" nennt, so vollkommen zu verändern, daß er vor den Spiegel treten müßte, um sich zu überzeugen, daß seine Physiognomie noch die alte geblieben sei. (R.L.I.606)

The motif of the journey once again functions as a metaphor for the individual's profound sense of dislocation from his past. The sudden disintegration of what he had considered to be an integral world order, which is brought about as a direct consequence of his actions, completely disorients Nikolai Brandeis:

Auf einmal schienen alle Begriffe umgestürzt... Aber diese Veränderungen beruhigten Brandeis nicht etwa, sondern verwirrten ihn vollends. Eines Abends überfiel ihn der Wahnsinn. (R.L.I.608)

The forces of circumstance have swept away everything that linked Brandeis with his past. His reaction, like Bernheim's, is to undertake a journey to "den Rand der Welt." (R.L.I.608) By carefully documenting the difference in attitude of the two men to their respective journeys, Roth prepares the reader for their different outcomes. The vocabulary used by Roth to describe Brandeis' journey highlights the latter's decisiveness, which distinguishes him from Paul Bernheim:

Er sah deutlich die Erde als eine Scheibe, von einem Stengel gehalten, etwa wie ein flacher Pilz mit zackigen Rändern. Diese zu erreichen war sein Ziel. Er bestieg ein Pferd. Er galoppierte nach dem Süden. Er erreichte... - das Meer. Er gelangte nach Konstantinopel. (R.L.I.608) (my emphasis)

The verbs are active and convey a keen sense of urgency.

By contrast Paul is presented as being totally passive.

Aber von diesen geheimen Trieben wußte er selbst wenig. Über ihnen lag, dicht und schwer, wie dieser Novembertag, eine trübe, neblige Gleichgültigkeit. (R.L.I.553)

As we saw earlier, the image of death becomes the symbol of the complete renunciation of individual responsibilities.

Es war, als hätte ihm der Tod, wie er so am Abend in der Baracke an ihm vorbeigegangen war, eine Ahnung von seiner roten und schwarzen und schrecklichen Süßigkeit geschenkt und in Paul die Sehnsucht nach ihr geweckt. (R.L.I.552)

For Brandeis the journey is the means through which he comes to terms with the chain of events which has so fundamentally dislocated him from his past.

Er gelangte nach Konstantinopel. Und erst hier wieder zu seiner Vernunft. (R.L.I.608)

Yet whereas Paul slips back into his old identity ("Er wurde wieder der alte Paul Bernheim. (R.L.I.557)), Nikolai Brandeis acknowledges the break with the past and, in de Chirico's terms "sees (things) from a different angle." (see above page 149, note 2)

Doch nein! Es war nicht seine alte Vernunft mehr! Es war ein ganz anderer Nikolai Brandeis,... Es war ein ganz neuer Nikolai Brandeis. (R.L.I.608)

This sudden break in "the endless rosary" (see above page 149, note 2), is reflected in the disruption of the flow of the narrative tense, in which form the verb implicitly belongs to a causal chain. The pathological impulse which caused Brandeis to shoot the priest sets him at once outside the set of coherent relations which characterized his former existence. Brandeis discovers that each stage in his life is merely a product of the one preceding it, and that it immediately cedes to a new one. His life seems to

outrun the limits set by the measured flow of chronological time, which carefully unites a cause with an end and belies the synchronic element of his experience:

"Wieviel bist du? Bist du einer?" fragte er. "Ich bin zehn! Ich war Lehrer, Student, Bauer, Zarist, Mörder, Verräter. Ich habe Satttheit gekannt, Frieden, Hunger, Krieg, Typhus, Not, Nacht und Tag, Frost und Hitze, Gefahr und Leben. Aber das alles ereignete sich mit mir vor meiner Geburt! Der heutige Nikolai Brandeis ist erst vor ein paar Wochen geboren." (R.L.I.608)

The synchronic element of the process of conflict and resolution, and the subsumption of the past in the present, which we described earlier as a function of the way in which the novel works upon and re-presents the values and feelings of the Bernheim family type, is encapsulated and expressed in the series of contradictory elements which constitute Brandeis' experience: "Satttheit"/"Hunger", "Frieden"/"Krieg", "Nacht"/"Tag", "Frost"/"Hitze". (R.L.I.608)

This synchronic element is also represented in the temporal dissonances between the chapters. The outline of Brandeis' biography is set between the opening passage of chapter IX, which describes the march of the right-wing party through the streets, and the beginning of chapter X, where the description of the march is resumed and Brandeis' meeting with the two theatre owners is described.

Brandeis' experiences have given him an independence of spirit which is in direct contrast with Paul Bernheim's complete inability to free himself from the ideas and values of the social group he represents. Yet Brandeis' freedom is negatively expressed:

Ich bin also ein Neugeborener, eben ins Leben getreten.
Was soll ich in dieser Welt? Lohnt es sich, sie zu

erleben? Ich habe nur eine Freiheit: sie wieder zu verlassen. (R.L.I.608)

His new found freedom consists in being able to observe in others the continuing process of conflict and resolution, which he has undergone, and which is still taking place in his own personality. Even in this state of "freedom" Brandeis is unable to transcend the values and beliefs of contemporary society: in the very articulation of his freedom, in the realization of new horizons, he is reminded of his past:

"Die Menschen kommen mir merkwürdig vor, weil ich in jedem ein Stück vom alten, verstorbenen Nikolai Brandeis wiederfinde. Sie leben noch von Idealen, haben Gesinnungen, Häuser, Schulen, Behörden, Pässe, sie sind Patrioten und Antipatrioten,... Ich bin nichts von alledem. Ich habe Vaterländer gehabt, sie sind untergegangen." (R.L.I.609)

Brandeis conceives of his freedom as the facility "zu beobachten, wie die anderen Erfahrungen machen." (R.L.I.609) The experiences of others are only intelligible to him, and only hold his interest, because he views them from the inside: he finds them curious because he is unable to free himself totally from the ideas and beliefs of contemporary society. Brandeis' journey, in the physical and metaphysical sense, leads him inexorably back to his starting point. The only way in which Brandeis considers he can enjoy his position as a privileged observer of social life is by achieving financial independence:

"So wie die Welt heute ist - und sie interessiert mich, das heißt fast: sie gefällt mir -, muß man Geld haben, um frei zu sein." (R.L.I.609)

This decision places him within the context of the social relations which produced the ideas and beliefs of the

Bernheim family type, which Brandeis himself exposes as false. In a conversation with his secretary, Brandeis admits that he finds himself limited by the conditions of his new existence.

"Glauben Sie mir, der Generaldirektor gehört seiner Tafel, seiner Visitkarte, seiner Rolle, seiner Stellung... nicht umgekehrt!... Die Abzeichen meiner Macht werden anfangen, imposanter zu werden als ich. Ich werde nicht mehr den Launen folgen können, die meine einzige Freude sind." (R.L.I.661)

Brandeis' continual shedding of his former existence becomes the assertion of his essential lack of freedom, rather than the ultimate expression of his independence. Brandeis himself is trapped within the very values and beliefs whose flaws and inconsistencies he reveals through his relationship with Paul Bernheim. Once again the motif of the journey is used to describe an individual's inability to reach an "ultimate threshold of articulation." (see above page 159, note 2)

Er dachte nicht weiter. Er kam oft bis zu dieser Grenze. Dann begann ein Reich, weit, unübersichtlich, unbekannt, keinem Gedanken erreichbar und keiner Vorstellung. Es war wie die Grenze der Welt, der Brandeis einmal entgegengewandert war. (R.L.I.662)

Yet from within the limits set by those values and beliefs, their flaws, their lack of substance are revealed through the form of the description:

Ihm schien, daß es sein Schicksal war, eine Welt, die aus Besitz und Beton bestand, als ein Schatten zu durchstreifen, mit den unheimlichen Fähigkeiten eines Geistes Schätze zu häufen,...wie man mit den Füßen in herbstlichen Blättern raschelt, und...alles, Gegenstände, Waren und Menschen, in Papier zu verwandeln. Gar nichts festhalten und selbst nicht gehalten werden! (R.L.I.663)

Brandeis' renewed perception and revaluation of his own life also casts doubt upon the substance and integrity of

the lives he sees around him:

Oder vielleicht war der Besitz der andern nicht wirklich? Sie gaben sich nur keine Rechenschaft darüber? Sie glaubten zu halten, und es zerrann?... Ihr Genuß wie ihr Gefühl, zu besitzen waren Funktionen ihrer Phantasie? (R.L.I.663)

As in the earlier novel Zipper und sein Vater, the motif of the theatre is used to convey the impression of alienated social reality. Brandeis, horrified at the social pretensions of the audience, sees individual members as mere puppets, assemblages of artificial components, in terms reminiscent of the early feuilleton Artisten (1).

Wie er sie so sah, Gesicht an Gesicht, Physiognomien, die aus Glatzen entstanden zu sein schienen, von Frisuren modelliert, als hätten diese nicht nur Haare, Bärte und Bartlosigkeit herzustellen, sondern auch Nasen, Stirnen und Münder,... (R.L.I.666)

As in the early feuilleton, the mysterious and alien nature of reality is incorporated into the form of the description. Through the motif of the theatre, Roth further expresses the falsity of the ideas and beliefs of the social group represented by the Bernheims: the device of the dramatic "Fiktion" becomes a metaphor for the ways in which the values of the Bernheim family type conceal the elements of the real which they contain. As the values of the Bernheims reveal their flaws in the very way in which they are presented, so the dramatic "Fiktion", by disclaiming its very fictitiousness, reveals itself as "das Spiegelbild eines Traums vom Leben".

Er dachte daran, daß es ein unanständiges Geschäft

(1) Joseph Roth. "Artisten", Der Neue Tag, 25.1.1920, vol.IV. pp.785-88.

Die Frauen, meist schon in "Bühnentoilette", aus Schminkdosen zusammengekleistertes Temperament in den Zügen und Atropinimitation von Leben in den puppenfaden Glasaugen. (IV.786)

war, für eine Fiktion zu bezahlen, die nicht zugab, daß sie eine war. Für ein Stück, das vorgab, ein gesteigertes Leben zu enthalten und das, verglichen mit seinen eigenen, mit Brandeis' Erlebnissen... keineswegs gesteigertes Leben war, sondern das Spiegelbild eines Traums vom Leben,... (R.L.I.617-8)

Rechts und Links ends with the resumption of a journey which becomes a metaphor for the internal logic of the novel. As the novel is unable to transcend the values and beliefs which produced it, it continually relates back to itself: the process of conflict and resolution is synchronic. As we saw earlier, elements of the values of Felix Bernheim's generation re-appear in his son's. As Brandeis' journey cannot be concluded, so the novel ends with the words - "Und also beginnt hier ein neues Kapitel." (R.L.I.690)

Chapter VII.

Hiob

Our examination of Roth's earlier novels has focussed on the way in which he exposes the insufficiency of the values, feelings and ideas of contemporary society from within a fictional representation of that society. By examining the texts as complex relations between different structural elements, we have seen how Roth both creates a uniquely stable and harmonious world and highlights the provisional nature of the relation of fiction to reality from within the novels themselves. An examination of the function of the miracle in Hiob, the miracle which cures Mendel Singer's son Menuchim, will highlight the limits of realism within the novel. The ambiguous status of the miracle with which the novel ends is the indirect expression of Roth's equivocal view of the function of language which we discussed briefly in the introduction. We have seen that although Roth creates a set of meanings which has no extra-linguistic basis, this performative function is based on a claim to be founded on the knowledge that it is impossible to give an adequate representation of reality. The miracle which cures Menuchim and restores a measure of happiness to his father's last days is a narrative solution which draws our attention to the internal limits of the novel. Menuchim's remarkable recovery and sudden reappearance at the end of the novel is a metaphor for the operations of the fiction itself.

As we saw in the introduction, Roth's linguistic scepticism does not rest on a spurious distinction between language and "reality". (1) This would entail a "totalitarian" conception of reality, a view of reality as an imaginary whole which the writer could stand outside and contemplate from a distance. Yet "reality" seen from within, from the only possible perspective, has no outside. It is not possible to move beyond it and give a single determinate representation of it. As we shall see, the internal logic of the novel in fact demands the ambiguity of the miraculous ending. Just as Mendel Singer is unable to abandon the ideas and beliefs which form the basis of his existence, so the structure of the novel curves back upon itself. The status of the miracle evades precise definition because of the paradoxical nature of the writer's knowledge, which we described in the introduction. This knowledge takes the negative form of a realization that it is impossible to explore and explain reality adequately because the writer cannot step outside it.

As we shall see with particular reference to Roth's last work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker, the values and feelings embodied in the Jewish culture of Eastern Europe

(1) see also J.P. Stern. Some Observations on Austrian Language Consciousness (Paper given to conference on Austrian Literature, St. Andrews, March 1980, reprint in S.P.I.G.S. Glasgow, 1981.)

Stern adduces Karl Kraus to demonstrate the philosophical absurdity of a dichotomy between language and reality.

Language, Kraus is saying, is description and the thing described, repository and source of experience. It is word and deed - it is itself a form of life:..., p. 120.

continued to exercise a profound influence until the end of his life. (1) Roth was however very much aware of the pressures threatening the integrity of the way of life of the shtetl communities, and in the spiritual communities which were their natural successors. The community presented in Hiob is threatened from the outset. Roth does not re-create an idealized image of a community which embodied the values he so prized. (2) The ordered rhythm of Mendel Singer's existence is challenged by the demands made by the wider community. Two of his sons join the army, and the only escape for the one who does not join willingly is to emigrate to America. Singer's daughter forsakes the traditional values of Jewish womanhood and has a series of brief affairs with Cossack soldiers. It is an overwhelming concern for the welfare of his daughter that finally persuades Mendel Singer to accept his son's invitation to travel to America so that the family can be reunited. The Singers' crippled son Menuchim cannot make the

(1) There is considerable doubt as to whether Joseph Roth did convert to Catholicism towards the end of his life. David Bronsen sets out the contradictory pieces of evidence in the final chapter of Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, see esp. pp.600-1

Our examination of Roth's final work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker will highlight the examination of Hasidic faith which underlies the ostensibly Catholic subject matter.

(2) see also Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (trans. J.Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, pp.167-8

Die ostjüdische Epik -...will keine optimistisch idealisierte Welt darstellen, sondern die auch noch der Katastrophe immanente Dialektik, das Miteinander von Positivem und Negativem, die Erkenntnis, daß nicht nur das Chaos existiert, sondern daß es sowohl das Chaos als auch die Ordnung, sowohl die Zärtlichkeit als auch die Perversion gibt.

journey, yet Mendel is prepared to sacrifice this close bond in the interests of his daughter. The narrator describes the decline in the relationship between Mendel Singer and his wife after the birth of their third son. Mendel accepts what he considers a blow of fate, but his wife Deborah is driven to seek at least the hope of some lasting remedy for Menuchim's condition. She visits the Hasidic rabbi in Kluczysk and is told that her son will recover fully after many years, provided that she remain with him. Mendel rejects the idea of any intermediary between himself and God and bears his fate with resignation. With characteristic detachment the narrator documents Mendel's simple piety:

Er lächelte über den Glauben seiner Frau an den Rabbi. Seine schlichte Frömmigkeit bedurfte keiner vermittelnden Gewalt zwischen Gott und den Menschen. (H.I.857)

Despite Deborah's misgivings about leaving her son, the Singers make the journey to America to be reunited with their son Schemarjah.

The second part of the novel documents the head-on collision between two totally different cultures. The cohesion of Mendel's family life, already threatened in his native Zuchnow, is further undermined as his children frantically pursue aspirations which are totally different from their father's. Mendel however remains entrenched in the system of values espoused by the East-European Jewish community, to the exasperation of his wife, who exclaims impatiently:

"Du benimmst dich wie ein russischer Jude", to which Mendel replies - "Ich bin ein russischer Jude",... (H.I.938)

It is Mendel's faithfulness to his religious and cultural identity which sustains him in an alien society. His life continues to revolve around his religious observance, a routine in direct contrast to the hectic pursuit of elusive goals which characterizes American society as it is presented in the novel. Yet Mendel is forced to abandon the observance of his religion as a form of individual protest against the devastating chain of events which overtakes his family. The American involvement in the war robs him of his son Schemarjah, who is killed in action. His wife Deborah breaks down as a result and dies of grief. Mendel's daughter Miriam becomes insane and is confined to a mental institution, a victim of the increased sexual licence possible in her new environment. Despite the vehemence of his protest against God, Mendel is unable to reject him entirely. As he attempts to burn his prayerbooks, Mendel realizes the extent to which his existence is defined by his relation to God:

Er hielt das rotsamtene Säckchen in den Armen, aber er warf es nicht hinein. Ein paarmal hob er es in die Höhe, aber seine Arme ließen es wieder sinken. Sein Herz war böse auf Gott, aber in seinen Muskeln wohnte noch die Furcht vor Gott. (H.I.946)

Confronted with the outward signs of his religious observance, Mendel becomes aware that he cannot step beyond his relationship with God:

Er warf einen schüchternen, aber bösen Blick auf den Sack mit den heiligen Gegenständen an der Wand,... Ich bete nicht! sagte sich Mendel. Aber es tat ihm weh, daß er nicht betete. Sein Zorn schmerzte ihn und die Machtlosigkeit dieses Zorns. Obwohl Mendel mit Gott böse war, herrschte Gott noch über die Welt. Der Haß konnte ihn ebensowenig fassen wie die Frömmigkeit. (H.I.952)

Firmly rooted in the Hasidic tradition, Mendel is forced

to acknowledge that his personal revolt has its internal limits. It is at this point that the substance of the novel, an examination of a personal revolt within Hasidism, intersects with the formal operations of the narrative itself. The narrative solution of Hiob emerges as a paradoxical relation between linguistic scepticism and Hasidic faith, which is taken up again in Roth's final work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker. (1) God pervades Mendel's existence, his faith is merely in abeyance. There is no question of Mendel finally abandoning his faith, since without it his life would be literally impossible. It is impossible for Mendel to cross the frontiers of his faith because these frontiers have no existence. He is forced to lead a dim shadow life which ultimately leads him back to his starting point and roots him further within his original beliefs. During his grim years in America the only path open to Mendel Singer is to follow the advice given in a short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer:

Wenn du nicht glücklich bist, handle, als ob du glücklich wärest. Das Glück wird später schon kommen...
Bist du verzweifelt, handle, als glaubtest du dennoch.
Der Glaube kommt nach. (2)

Although Mendel cannot mimic true happiness, he continues to make his contribution to the community, even to the extent of mimicking the action of prayer:

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- (1) The religious theme, which is linked to Roth's linguistic scepticism appears time and time again in Roth's later novels, Tarabas for example, and especially Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker. For this reason I reject Hohoff's division of Roth's works into three distinct phases. See introduction, p. 13, note 1.
- (2) Isaac Bashevis Singer. "A Piece of Advice", in: The Spinoza of Market Street, cit.in C. Magris, op.cit.p.173

Wohl wurde er manchmal gebraucht, wenn ein zehnter Mann fehlte, um die vorgeschriebene Zahl der Betenden vollzählig zu machen. Dann ließ er sich seine Anwesenheit bezahlen. (H.I.951)

Although Mendel has openly rejected God in front of his friends, he still continues to live according to the Jewish laws. The narrator describes at some length in chapter XV how he takes an active part in the Skowronnek's elaborate domestic preparations for the Easter festival:

Ostern bereitete man vor, in allen Häusern half Mendel. Den Hobel legte er an die hölzernen Tischplatten, um sie zu säubern von den profanen Nahrungsresten des ganzen Jahres... (H.I.958)

Mendel's life revolves around the day to day concerns of the East European Jewish community. America remains an alien culture and Mendel makes no attempt to integrate himself into the society around him. His only links with it are through his children, and these links are severed as his children fall victim to the society they have taken to their hearts. After Schemarjah's death Mendel comments to his friends:

"Zwischen mir und meinem Enkel", erwiderte Mendel, "ist das Band zerrissen, denn Schemarjah ist tot, mein Sohn und der Vater meines Enkels... Das Haus meines Sohnes ist nicht mein Haus. Ich habe dort nichts zu suchen." (H.I.949)

Mendel's suffering in America only makes him more determined to return to his point of origin, to plan a journey back to Zuchnow. His plans are thwarted by his discovery that his wife's savings are not sufficient to cover his expenses. Mendel's journey becomes a spiritual goal, giving his life a sense of purpose as he faces old age.

Mendel's patience and tenacity are finally rewarded and

his faith fully restored after his reunion with his one surviving son Menuchim. Menuchim has made a complete recovery, and he arrives in New York, completing a successful tour as a musician. Menuchim becomes a symbol of the integrity and durability of the values of the East European Jewish community. He is the only member of the Singer family who remains unscathed at the end of the novel. (1) The sudden reappearance of Menuchim in the concluding pages of Hioh relates the novel back to its starting point, to the rabbi's prophecy that Menuchim would indeed make a full recovery after many years of suffering. The only deviation from the prophecy is the fact that Mendel and Deborah did not stay with their crippled son during his long illness. Mendel's deep scepticism about the efficacy of the rabbi's intervention is proved right. His faith, and his deep personal relationship with God are rewarded as his son is cured anyway. Menuchim's recovery does however have a rational explanation, which is furnished at some length by the narrator, who takes on the role of a distanced and detached commentator. Menuchim's own account of his fortunes after his family's departure for America reveals that he had responded to medical treatment and had flourished in the home of a doctor who had adopted him. It was the encouragement he received from the doctor and his wife which paved the way for his successful career as a musician. His cure can thus only be said to be

(1) The fate of Schemarjah's and Menuchim's brother Jonas remains uncertain at the end of the novel.

truly "miraculous" in a restricted sense: from Mendel's perspective his son's recovery is an act of God, and a clear vindication of his personal faith. The rational explanation furnished for Menuchim's recovery and sudden appearance in New York pales into insignificance when compared with the strength of Mendel's emotion on seeing his son.

Mendel sinkt vor dem sitzenden Menuchim nieder, er sucht mit unruhigem Mund und wehendem Bart die Hände seines Sohnes, seine Lippen küssen, wo sie hintreffen, die Knie, die Schenkel, die Weste Menuchims. (H.I.974)

The substance of the novel is the exploration of the nature of Mendel Singer's faith, and of his personal relationship with God. Mendel's perception of the "miracle" which cures his son is thus the device which brings the novel back to its starting point, an affirmation of the solidity and durability of the religious and cultural values of the Jews of Eastern Europe. For Mendel Singer faith is a way of life: its loss entails the loss of life itself, as the tragic examples in his own family clearly demonstrate. God dwells within Mendel's world as it is literally impossible to conceive of him as existing beyond it, remote and irrelevant. Despite Mendel's rejection of the Hasidic "Wunder-rabbi" as an intermediary between himself and God, the narrative solution to Hiob is still drawn from the Hasidic tradition. Mendel experiences God as both remote and closely related to his everyday life. The substance of the novel points towards Martin Buber's assessment of the apparently paradoxical nature of God's relation to the world of man - He is at once beyond it and within it:

Unter vollkommener Wahrung der Weltentrücktheit und Weltüberlegenheit des doch welteinwohnenden Gottes ist die breschenlose Ganzheit des Menschenlebens in ihren Sinn eingesetzt: ein Empfangen der Welt von Gott und ein Handeln an der Welt um Gottes Willen zu sein. Empfangend und handelnd weltverbunden steht der Mensch, vielmehr nicht "der", sondern dieser bestimmte Mensch, du, ich, unmittelbar vor Gott. (1)

The substance of the narrative solution and the form of its expression thus overlap: just as Mendel cannot move beyond his relationship with a personal God who is sometimes remote, so the novel itself cannot move beyond the limits sketched out at the beginning. The initial prophecy about Menuchim's recovery is fulfilled, yet the status of the miracle remains ambiguous as the rational explanation for Menuchim's recovery is provided. Roth's own scepticism, his doubt at the very possibility of knowledge, finds its expression in an ending which refuses to state directly where a measure of certainty can be found. As we shall see, it is this fundamental irony which shapes much of Roth's later fiction. The lines laid down in Hiob are developed in the later novels and reach their culmination in Roth's last work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker.

(1) Martin Buber. "Die Chassidische Botschaft", in: Werke Bd. 3. Schriften zum Chassidismus, Kösel Verlag, Verlag Lambert Schneider, München/Heidelberg, 1963, p.748

Chapter VIII.

Radetzkymarsch

Roth's best known novel Radetzkymarsch, which traces the gradual decline of the Habsburg monarchy by following the mixed fortunes of one family, is in a sense written back to front. The limits of the narrative are quite clearly set by the historical events which resulted in the final collapse of the Habsburg monarchy. (1) From the outset the narrator's perspective is distant: he knows what his characters can only guess at. From his perspective, and from the reader's, the characters are performing a pathetic roundelay, a mimicry of real action. From our post-1918 awareness the individual histories of the members of the Trotta family are set against the certainty of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their actions are presented as being governed by the inevitability of the collapse of their world. The extent to which the possibilities for individual initiative have been narrowed down is exemplified in the brief conversation between Carl Joseph Trotta and his friend Max Demant, after their visit to the

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- (1) As David Bronsen points out, Radetzkymarsch is not a historical novel in the sense that it is chronologically accurate, but in the sense that the decline of the monarchy provides Roth's frame of reference.

Mit seinem nächsten Roman, dem Radetzkymarsch, versucht Roth eine neue Orientierung, er stellt sich auf eine geschichtlich bedingte Sicht und die Analyse einer traditionsverwurzelten, aber brüchig gewordenen Lebensordnung ein.

David Bronsen. Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, p.391 and ff -418

brothel. Carl Joseph laments the fact that he has no opportunity to save the emperor like his grandfather did, nor to alter the course of events in any way:

"Ich bin sein Enkel!" sagte Carl Joseph. "Ich hab' keine Gelegenheit, ihm das Leben zu retten; leider!" (Rm.II.80)

Before the "Ehrenaffäre" which will separate the two friends for ever has run its full course, Max Demant once again elicits from Trotta an admission of the limited possibilities for individual action:

"Fühlst du nicht auch, wie man von den Toten lebt?"
"Ich lebe vom Großvater", sagte Trotta. (Rm.II.91)

Although the narrator views his characters with a certainty which is the benefit of hindsight, the narrative perspective of Radetzkymarsch is in fact a highly mobile one. In this chapter I intend to highlight the narrative diversity which gives the novel both its form and content. An examination of the variety of narrative perspectives in Radetzky-marsch will show that the transparency which characterizes the narrator's presentation of the Trotta family also characterizes Roth's narrative technique. This transparency of the function of the narrative itself informs the content of the novel. Although Radetzkymarsch is written in the form of a family chronicle, an examination of its narrative perspectives will demonstrate that it is not derived monolithically from a unique and simple conception. In this chapter we will investigate the ways in which the text advertises the plurality of its voices.

An analysis of the structural elements of Roth's best known work will show that his narrative technique is in many

respects similar to the one he used in Zipper und sein Vater. In the earlier chapters on Die Flucht ohne Ende and Zipper und sein Vater we saw how the narrative tense posits a set of clearly related actions and functions as the ideal tool for the construction of a stable, coherent reality. In Radetzkymarsch we will again see how Roth undermines all the signs which point to the existence of an elaborately constructed, coherent world, without abandoning the authoritative narrative perspective. In short, we will see how he sets his language against itself and illumines the dual function of language as a reflection of our perception of reality and as our means of criticizing that perception.

The novel opens with an authoritative description of the events at the battle of Solferino which lead to Leutnant Trotta's sudden rise to fame. (1) The narrator also documents the sense of self-estrangement which succeeds Trotta's ennoblement:

Als hätte man ihm sein eigenes Leben gegen ein fremdes, neues, in einer Werkstatt angefertigtes vertauscht, wiederholte er sich jede Nacht vor dem Einschlafen und jeden Morgen nach dem Erwachen seinen neuen Rang und seinen neuen Stand, trat vor den Spiegel und bestätigte sich, daß sein Angesicht das alte war. (Rm.II.13)

The concomitant of Trotta's self-estrangement is his estrangement from his father, and from the cultural roots his father represents. Trotta's new rank and station in life have destroyed the already rather tenuous links with

(1) For a detailed analysis of the opening pages of Radetzkymarsch, see Hartmut Scheible. Joseph Roth. Mit einem Essay über Gustave Flaubert, Kohlhammer-Verlag, Stuttgart, 1971, p.101

his father:

Dem adligen und ausgezeichneten Hauptmann aber, der im fremden und fast unheimlichen Glanz der kaiserlichen Gnade umherging wie in einer goldenen Wolke, war der leibliche Vater plötzlich ferngerückt, und die gemessene Liebe, die der Nachkomme dem Alten entgegenbrachte, schien ein verändertes Verhalten und eine neue Form des Verkehrs zwischen Vater und Sohn zu verlangen. (Rm.II.13)

The question which faces the young captain Trotta as he attempts to write his routine letter to his father is the question which is also the starting point of my examination of Roth's narrative technique. How is it possible to construe a form of difference in a form of identity, to encode contradictory messages in a narrative form which apparently demands a single clear line of antecedents and consequences?

Wie aber sollte man jetzt,...die gesetzmäßige, für ein ganzes Soldatenleben berechnete Form der Briefe ändern und zwischen die normierten Sätze ungewöhnliche Mitteilungen von ungewöhnlich gewordenen Verhältnissen rücken, die man selbst noch kaum begriffen hatte? (Rm.II.14)

Roth's solution, as far as his narrative technique is concerned, is very similar to captain Trotta's. The outward form of his narrative remains unchanged.

Der Sohn schrieb dem Alten die gewohnten Briefe. (Rm.II.16)

The tone of the extract from the "Lesebuch" which Trotta finds so offensive, in fact differs very little from the tone of the description of the battle of Solferino in the opening pages of the novel. (1) Roth's ironic parody of

(1) Scheible comments of the Lesebuch episode:

Konsequent, nur eben aus der grellen Eindeutigkeit, die das Lesebuch kennzeichnet, stellt sie die Welt so wieder her, wie sie sich auf der ersten Seite des Romans gezeigt hatte.
op.cit. p.101

the opening pages of the novel serves further to undermine the "veracity" of the account. Through its distortive imitation (1) of the opening pages, the language of the text proclaims, like Hauptmann Trotta, "Es ist eine Lüge!" (Rm.II.17) The reader, like Trotta, "wird vertrieben aus dem Paradies der einfachen Gläubigkeit." (Rm.II.21) In the second chapter, Roth re-asserts the authoritative narrative perspective: the detailed descriptions of the "Bezirkshauptmanns" ritual testing of his son Carl Joseph and the lengthy description of the meal, serve to halt the action. Roth conveys the sense of the absence of any progression in the lives of the characters by dwelling on the minute details of their everyday existence. (2)

We saw in the section on Zipper und sein Vater how the linear development of the novel, the technical element of the narrative which aimed at imposing the image of a stable and coherent universe, was weakened by the fact that Arnold Zipper's life was to a large extent a re-tracing of his father's. In Radetzkymarsch Roth conveys Carl Joseph's

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- (1) see Pierre Machery. Towards a Theory of Literary Production, (trans.G.Wall) Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p.61

We have defined literary discourse as parody, as a contestation of language rather than a representation of reality. It distorts rather than imitates. Moreover the idea of imitation,...implies distortion, if,...the essence of resemblance is difference. The image that corresponded perfectly with the original would no longer be an image; it remains an image by virtue of its difference from that which it resembles.

- (2) see Hansjürgen Böning. Joseph Roths "Radetzkymarsch". Thematik, Struktur, Sprache, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1968, p.119

Präzise Angaben treten zahlreich nur dann auf, wenn sie das quälend langsame oder bedrohlich schnelle Vergehen der Zeit ausdrücken sollen,...Durch die markierten Zeitpunkte wird die Zeit in diesen Fällen in genau fixierte einzelne Abschnitte der objektiven Zeit zerteilt, so daß ihr Dahingleiten oder zögerndes Stehenbleiben dem Leser besonders betont erscheint.

inability to take decisive action about the course of his own life by illustrating how he sees his life in terms of his grandfather's.

Die Neugier des Enkels kreiste beständig um die erloschene Gestalt und den verschollenen Ruhm des Großvaters... Es (das Bildnis) zerfiel in zahlreiche tiefe Schatten und helle Lichtflecke, in Pinselstriche und Tupfen, in ein tausendfältiges Gewebe der bemalten Leinwand,... Nichts verriet der Tote. Nichts erfuhr der Junge. (Rm.II.40)

Although the apparent stability of the world of the illustrious hero of Solferino has been undermined, as we saw above, Roth depicts the influence he continues to exert on his grandson.

Man lebte im Schatten des Großvaters! Das war es! Man war ein Enkel des Helden von Solferino, der einzige Enkel. Man fühlte den dunklen, rätselhaften Blick des Großvaters ständig im Nacken! Man war der Enkel des Helden von Solferino! (Rm.II.69)

The authoritative narrator emphasizes the relationship which imposes itself so heavily on the youngest Trotta by repeating the phrase "ein (der) Enkel des Helden von Solferino". Carl Joseph repeatedly finds himself incapable of acting in the way his grandfather would have done. Faced with the task of telling his father of the circumstances which lead to the duel involving his friend Max Demant, he becomes aware of his own powerlessness:

Was hätte der Held von Solferino in dieser Lage getan? Carl Joseph fühlte den gebieterischen Blick des Großvaters im Nacken. Der Held von Solferino diktierte dem zaghaften Enkel bündige Entschlossenheit... Aber um diesen Brief zu schreiben, hätte man so stark sein müssen wie der Großvater, so einfach, so entschieden,... Man war nur der Enkel! (Rm.II.99-100)

Trotta's increasing sense of his own powerlessness, of his inability to measure up to his grandfather's model, is closely related to his sense of remoteness from the

figurehead of the monarchy, the Kaiser Franz Joseph. (1)
Roth conveys the Kaiser's increasing remoteness from his people through the description of his portrait:

Damals war es jeden Augenblick so gewesen, als könnte der Kaiser aus dem schmalen, schwarzen Rahmen treten. Allmählich aber bekam der Allerhöchste Kriegsherr das gleichgültige, gewohnte und unbeachtete Angesicht, das seine Briefmarken und seine Münzen zeigten. (2)
(Rm.II.74)

Roth conveys the sense that the Kaiser has outlived his historical destiny by highlighting the static qualities of the portrait. The omnipresent image of the Kaiser is incapable of development:

Nur der Kaiser, der Kaiser schien eines Tages, innerhalb einer ganz bestimmten Stunde, alt geworden zu sein; und seit jener Stunde in seiner eisigen und ewigen, silbernen und schrecklichen Greisenhaftigkeit eingeschlossen zu bleiben,... Die Jahre wagten sich nicht an ihn heran. (Rm.II.74)

After the duel which kills his only friend, Max Demant, Carl Joseph becomes even more aware of the contradictions which form the base of his existence. He becomes aware of the need to take decisive action, and of his crippling inability to do so. These two impulses which cancel each other out necessitate the commentary of the narrator:

Es war ihm, als müßte er jetzt etwas Besonderes tun - aber weit und breit fand sich nichts Besonderes!... Er suchte in Wirklichkeit nach einer freiwilligen Buße. Er hätte es niemals ausdrücken können, aber wir können es ja von ihm sagen: es bedrängte ihn unsäglich, daß er ein Werkzeug in der Hand des Unglücks war. (Rm.II.115)

By drawing attention to Trotta's inability to express his

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- (1) The functional description "der Kaiser", or the epithet "der Allerhöchste Kriegsherr" are among the most common ways in which Roth refers to the figurehead of the monarchy.
 - (2) The remoteness of the imperial family is also conveyed through the peasants' song. (Rm.II.125)

feelings, the narrator advertises his own explanatory role, thus undermining the realist illusion. Even when giving an authoritative explanation of the actions of the characters, the narrator distances himself from his own statements by parodying the language of the characters themselves:

Es wäre kaum schicklich gewesen, den einzigen Nachkommen des neugeadelten Geschlechts derer von Trotta und Sipolje in jener Provinz dienen zu lassen, welcher der Held von Solferino entstammte, der Enkel analphabetischer slowenischer Bauern,... (Rm.II.126)

The narrator alludes to the "Bezirkshauptmann's" highly developed sense of propriety and incorporates his remoteness from his more humble origins into the narrative perspective.

Roth gives authoritative narrative assertions the character of provisional statements by immediately qualifying each assertion. He describes how the inhabitants of the north eastern province make their living from "einer Art von Handel". (Rm.II.127) The qualification however immediately undermines the authority of the first statement: instead of making a series of authoritative statements, Roth demonstrates the narrator edging towards a more accurate picture:

Wir sagen: eine Art von Handel: denn weder die Ware noch die geschäftlichen Bräuche entsprachen den Vorstellungen, die man sich in der zivilisierten Welt vom Handel gemacht hat. (1) (Rm.II.127-8)

Roth employs the same device to counterbalance the metaphorical description of the isolation of the inhabitants of Galicia:

Denn sie lebten fern von ihr (der Welt), zwischen dem Osten und dem Westen, eingeklemmt zwischen Nacht und Tag, sie selbst eine Art lebendiger Gespenster, welche

(1) Roth's description of life in Galicia accords with his description of Jewish towns in Juden auf Wanderschaft, (III.306-12)

die Nacht geboren hat und die am Tage umgehn.
Sagten wir: sie hätten "eingeklemmt" gelebt? Die Natur
ihrer Heimat ließ es sie nicht fühlen. (Rm.II.128)

The spatial metaphor which Roth uses to describe the Galician's lifestyle also characterizes Graf Chojnicki's attitude to the events as described by the narrator. Like Eduard P. who appears in the final pages of Zipper und sein Vater, Chojnicki is able to take a distanced and detached view of the events he sees unfolding before him. The narrator makes Chojnicki's detachment apparent from the outset:

Er gehörte zu den Leuten, die keine Feinde haben können, aber auch keine Freunde, lediglich Gefährten, Genossen und Gleichgültige. (Rm.II.134)

Chojnicki confidently predicts the demise of the Habsburg monarchy, attributing its inevitable decline to the growth of nationalism and to increasing political unrest:

"Dieses Reich muß untergehn. Sobald unser Kaiser die Augen schließt, zerfallen wir in hundert Stücke... Alle Völker werden ihre dreckigen, kleinen Staaten errichten, und sogar die Juden werden einen König in Palästina ausrufen. In Wien stinkt schon der Schweiß der Demokraten,... Die Arbeiter haben rote Fahnen und wollen nicht mehr arbeiten..." (Rm.II.136-7)

On the occasion of the "Bezirkshauptmann's" visit to his son, Chojnicki gives vehement expression to his belief in the imminent collapse of the monarchy:

"Aber sie (die Monarchie) zerfällt bei lebendigem Leibe... Ein Greis, dem Tode geweiht,...hält den alten Thron, einfach durch das Wunder, daß er auf ihm noch sitzen kann. Wie lange noch, wie lange noch? Die Zeit will uns nicht mehr! Diese Zeit will sich erst selbständige Nationalstaaten schaffen!" (Rm.II.161)

The figure of Chojnicki has frequently been identified with the narrator. (1) Yet by integrating Chojnicki into

(1) see Hansjürgen Böning. Joseph Roths "Radetzkymarsch", Thematik, Struktur, Sprache, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1968, p.86

the world of the Trottas as a commentator, Roth is able to re-establish the narrator's distance from the characters. (1) The narrator is able to assert a consciousness of the historical limits of the action in the reader's mind by commenting on the "Bezirkshauptmann's" reactions to Chojnicki's powerful expression of the gradual breakdown of the monarchy:

Dennoch schien ihm,...auf einmal der Satz des Grafen alle Wirrnis zu erklären, die er in den letzten Wochen und besonders seit dem Tode des alten Jacques gefühlt hatte. (Rm.II.161)

The narrator also retreats from his authoritative narrative stance by using the word "schien" - he is merely expressing a possibility, not pronouncing on the objective state of mind of the "Bezirkshauptmann". (2) In compelling his own narrative to speak its true purposes, Roth undermines from within the narrative medium all the elements of suspense which mimic development. This is the principle of the novel's disparity, a disparity which is all too easily glossed over by attempts to see the novel in terms of a complex disposition of narrative perspectives. Hans-jürgen Böning writes of Roth:

...der Autor greift zu einer kontinuierlich wechselnden Perspektive, die bald personal, bald auktorial, bald omnipotent, bald in ihrem Wissen eingeschränkt ist. (3)

Despite its emphasis on the diversity of Roth's novel, an analysis which does not go beyond a careful and complete

(1) For a detailed examination of the relationship between the narrator and the characters, see Böning, op.cit., chp.1, pp.14-32

(2) see Böning, op.cit. p.16
Nicht der Wirklichkeit entsprechende Vorstellungen, sondern persönliche Impressionen werden hier ausgesprochen.

(3) Böning, op.cit. p.15

exposition of the "Erzählhaltung" reduces the work to a single dimension and ignores the fact that the novel unfolds on more than one plane. As Böning has indicated (1), Roth uses several devices to gain the readers' sympathy for the characters, although as he points out, many of them do not deserve our sympathy. Böning concludes:

So ergibt sich eine Art literarischer Sympathie, die man einer analogen Person des realen Lebens nicht in jedem Fall entgegenbringen würde. Der Bezirkshauptmann erscheint eher als "eine großartige Figur" denn als "ein großartiger Mensch". (2)

As Böning suggests, the reader becomes fully engaged in the world of the characters, to the extent that his moral scruples are suspended. Yet Böning's analysis of the internal variations which characterize the narrative perspective in Radetzkymarsch does not go far enough. It is inadequate because it does not arrive at the principle of what dislodges the novel internally. We saw that by integrating the figure of Chojnicki into the world of the Trottas as a sardonic commentator, Roth was able to re-establish the narrator's distance from the characters. Yet in so doing he alerts the reader to the uneven development of the novel and undermines the realist illusion he himself has created by reminding us of the novel's limits. The reader is engaged in a double movement - he identifies

(1) Böning, op.cit. p.38

Vor allem vier Stilmittel also - die Abstinenz des Erzählers im Werten, die impressionistische Technik, die Anlehnung des Erzählers an die Personen und die Äußerung des Mitgefühls - lassen die Figuren des "Radetzkymarsches" im positivem Licht erscheinen und ziehen den Leser in die Erzählung der Sympathie hinein.

(2) Böning, op.cit. p.38

with the "Bezirkshauptmann's" experiences, and is brought to reflect on them. This double movement within the text can be illustrated by another example. In his description of the "Bezirkshauptmann's" reaction to his servant Jacques' sudden illness, the narrator makes it clear that the "Bezirkshauptmann's" definition of reality is totally subjective:

Herr von Trotta ging zuerst zum offenen Fenster, wie um sich zu überzeugen, daß draußen die Welt noch bestand. (Rm.II.139)

In the ways illustrated above (see above page 198, note 1), Roth conveys the impact of this domestic catastrophe and elicits the reader's sympathy for the "Bezirkshauptmann". Yet in the description of how Herr von Trotta conducts his business affairs, the reader is alerted to the process whereby Trotta re-defines reality to suit his own needs:

Ein Sokolfest war angesagt, Delegierte aus "slawischen Staaten" - gemeint waren Serbien und Rußland, aber im dienstlichen Dialekt niemals namentlich erwähnt - sollten morgen schon kommen. (Rm.II.141)

The narrator clearly differentiates between an objective reality, which is merely alluded to, (1) and the "Bezirkshauptmann's" own construction of it:

...und wenn er in dem Bericht eines seiner Untergebenen etwa die Bezeichnung "revolutionärer Agitator" für einen der aktiven Sozialdemokraten las, so strich er dieses Wort und verbesserte mit roter Tinte: "verdächtiges Individuum". Vielleicht gab es irgendwo in der Monarchie Revolutionäre: im Bezirk des Herrn von Trotta kamen sie nicht vor. (Rm.II.142)

After describing how the growth of nationalism impinges upon the "Bezirkshauptmann's" world, the narrator details

(1) "vielleicht" points to the existence of a truth outside the domains of the novel. The narrator merely expresses a possibility.

the reflections Jacques' illness sets off in Herr von Trotta's mind:

Damals, in den ruhigen Jahren ,...hatte es noch keine Autonomisten, keine Sozialdemokraten und verhältnismäßig wenig "verdächtige Individuen" gegeben.... Es war nun dem Bezirkshauptmann, als machte ihn erst die Erkrankung Jacques' mit einemmal auf die grausamen Veränderungen der Welt aufmerksam und als bedrohte der Tod, der jetzt am Bettrand des alten Dieners sitzen mochte, nicht diesen allein. Wenn Jacques stirbt, fiel es dem Bezirkshauptmann ein, so stirbt gewissermaßen der Held von Solferino noch einmal und vielleicht - und hier stockte eine Sekunde das Herz des Herrn von Trotta - derjenige, den der Held von Solferino vor dem Tode bewahrt hatte.
(Rm.II.142)

Roth also alerts the reader to the closed factitiousness of his narrative by drawing attention to the arbitrary division of his material into chapters. He remarks of the "Bezirkshauptmann":

Eines Tages,...faßte er einen überraschenden Entschluß. Davon wollen wir im nächsten Kapitel berichten. (Rm.II.152)

As we saw in the section on Zipper und sein Vater, Roth consciously related two different conceptions of time, the flux of time as a subjective experience and the flow of objective, chronological time in order to make the reader aware of "die Lüge der Darstellung" (1) of the novel as an illusionary approximation to external reality. In Radetzkymarsch Roth also undermines the illusion of reality by playing upon two different conceptions of time. (2) When the narrator describes the life-style of Carl Joseph von Trotta's mistress, Frau von Taussig, he

(1) T.W. Adorno. Noten zur Literatur I., Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1965, p.68

(2) For an examination of Roth's treatment of time in Radetzkymarsch, see Böning, op.cit. 11. "Zeitgestaltung und Personen. 2. Heute - damals", pp.126-7

refers directly to the social mores of the time of narration, which he contrasts negatively with the period he is describing.

Es war einer jener wenigen aristokratischen Grundsätze, denen zufolge...die Frauen in einer überlieferten Moral lebten, aber diese und jene Frau lieben durfte wie ein Kavallerieoffizier. (Es waren jene Grundsätze, die man heute "verlogene" nennt, weil wir so viel unerbittlicher sind; unerbittlich, ehrlich und humorlos.) (Rm.II.186)

By distinguishing between the different temporal dimensions, Roth alerts the reader through the narrator to the fact that what he is reading is

...eine Historisierung a posteriori, die rückwärtige Beleuchtung eines historischen Urteils, das nunmehr besiegelt ist und willkürlich als eine fatale und dem Lauf der Dinge innewohnende Macht getarnt wird.(1)

It is through this "rückwärtige Beleuchtung" that Roth alerts the reader to the closed factitiousness of the narrative, and exposes the spurious naturalness of a narrative which attempts to conceal the fact that it is constructed with its limits in mind. We find another example of this device which dislodges the work internally in chapter XIV:

Damals, dachte der Leutnant (damals, dachte er), war er eine kurze Stunde stolz auf sich und seinen Beruf gewesen. (2) (Rm.II.198)

(1) Claudio Magris. "Die verschollenen Annalen. Historische Regression und epische Totalität in der Erzählkunst Joseph Roths", in: Lenau Forum 3, 1-2, 1971, p.59 see also Rm.II.260:

Die alten Männer aus der Zeit vor dem großen Krieg waren vielleicht törichter als die jungen von heute. Rm.II.261:

Nach den Vorstellungen jener verschollenen...Epoche... for further examples of how Roth distinguishes between different temporal dimensions.

(2) see also Rm.II.248: Er war erstens nicht neugierig. (Er war heute nicht neugierig.)

By repeating the word "damals" the narrator advertises the plurality of narrative perspectives and differentiates his own position as against Trotta's. His repetition makes the reader reflect on the appropriateness of the word "damals" from Trotta's point of view. ("Damals" in fact refers to two days previously. (Rm.II.198)) It is the narrator's repetition of "damals" that re-creates the true distance which separates Trotta from his past. It is by drawing the reader's attention to the absence of a single definition of time in the narrative that Roth breaks down the identity of a narrative which posits the existence of a stable and harmonious world.

In the chapter on Rechts und Links we saw that the principle that dislodged the work internally was Roth's use of the present tense to disrupt the linear development of the plot. In Radetzkymarsch, Roth also effects a radical shift in perspective by using the present tense. The description of the growing dissent among the "Borstensarbeiter" is introduced by an authoritative statement from the narrator:

Die ganze Welt war verändert. -
...An anderen zeigten sich sonderbare Plakate, wie man sie hierorts noch niemals gesehen hat. In allen Landessprachen fordern sie die Arbeiter der Borstenfabrik auf, die Arbeit niederzulegen. Die Borstenfabrikation ist die einzige, armselige Industrie dieser Gegend. (Rm.II.173)

Roth conveys the sense of change by undermining the narrative tense, the form which implies "a set of related and orientated actions". (1) We have seen how Roth displays

(1) Roland Barthes. Writing Degree Zero (trans. by A.Lavers and C. Smith), Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.36

a set of dissonances within the novel - the doubling of the narrator's role and the broadening of perspectives by the inclusion of the present tense. Roth conceals and naturalizes the visibility of the devices of aesthetic transformation by re-asserting the detached perspective of the narrator. Indeed as the novel evolves in relation to its historical limits, the narrator's ironic detachment becomes increasingly apparent. The narrator documents Carl Joseph's awareness of the inexorable decline of the Habsburg monarchy, of its ultimate insignificance, and describes Trotta's sense of hopelessness:

In diesen andern Ländern bedeutete der Name des Helden von Solferino gar nichts... Es war höchst verwirrend, solchen Gedanken nachzugehen; für einen Leutnant der Monarchie genau so verwirrend wie etwa für unsereinen die Überlegung, daß die Erde nur einer von Millionen und Abermillionen Weltkörpern sei, daß es noch unzählige Sonnen auf der Milchstraße gebe...und daß man also selbst ein sehr armseliges Individuum wäre,... (Rm.II.198-9)

The narrator makes Trotta's indecisiveness and alienation from the peasants apparent in a brief description before the confrontation with the factory workers:

Er fühlte, daß sie alle warteten, bis er wieder draußen wäre. Und er hätte ihnen gern gesagt, daß er nichts dafür könne. Aber er war weder imstande, ihnen etwas zu sagen, noch auch, sofort hinauszugehen. (Rm.II.204)

Trotta's "Sprachnot" (1) does not permit the other devices we have described to escape submission to the aesthetic ordering of the narrator. By setting Trotta's visions during the confrontation with the "Borstenarbeiter" in context, the narrator brings out their full impact:

(1) Böning, op.cit. p.86

Und wie eine auf Erden gefallene Wolke zog die dichte Gruppe der Demonstranten...vorbei. Den Leutnant ergriff eine dunkle Ahnung vom Untergang der Welt... Für die Dauer eines einzigen hurtigen Augenblicks kam über den Leutnant die erhabene Kraft, in Bildern zu schauen; und er sah die Zeiten wie zwei Felsen gegeneinanderrollen, und er selbst, der Leutnant, ward zwischen beiden zertrümmert. (Rm.II.206)

As the futility of his position becomes increasingly obvious to him (1), Carl Joseph withdraws from the position of being almost able to articulate his sense of his own decline. The narrator documents Trotta's increasing apathy and links Trotta's personal decline with the decline of the monarchy:

Fremd geworden war ihm die Armee. Fremd war ihm der Allerhöchste Kriegsherr.
Der Leutnant Trotta glich einem Manne, der nicht nur seine Heimat verloren hatte, sondern auch das Heimweh nach dieser Heimat. (Rm.II.222)

The decline of Carl Joseph is closely paralleled by his father's. Before describing the insubordination of the "Bezirkshauptmann's" prospective servants, and of the young Leutnant Nechwal, the narrator comments:

An kleinen Anzeichen, die er allerdings für gewaltige hielt, bemerkte er, daß sich rings um ihn die Welt veränderte, und er dachte an ihren Untergang und an die Prophezeiungen Chojnickis. (Rm.II.224)

The disintegration of what the "Bezirkshauptmann" had considered to be a stable world order is paralleled and highlighted by the fact that he no longer measures his existence against the flow of chronological time: (2)

Überhaupt entschwand ihm sein peinlich genauer Sinn für den Gang der Stunden, seitdem er diese und jene

(1) see Rm.II.203

"Lächerlich, dieses Soldatenspiel im Frieden! Niemals wird es einen Krieg geben! Verfaulen wird man in den Kantinen!"

(2) The narrator documents how the "Bezirkshauptmann", like "der alte Zipper" "nahm es mit der Zeit sehr genau". (Z.I.426) see Rm.II.153: "Er verglich die angegebenen mit den wirklichen Ankunfts- und Abfahrtszeiten und seine Taschenuhr mit allen Bahnhofsuhren,..."

seiner alten Gewohnheiten aufgegeben hatte.
(Rm.II.233)

Roth conveys the "Bezirkshauptmann's" sense of profound dislocation from what had appeared to him as a firmly established world order by describing how remote the portrait of the "Held von Solferino" appears to him: (1)

Das Angesicht seines Vaters konnte er nicht deutlich sehen. Das Gemälde zerfiel in hundert kleine, ölige Lichtflecke und Tupfen, der Mund war ein blaßroter Strich und die Augen zwei schwarze Kohlensplitter.
(Rm.II.237)

Like his son, whom the narrator describes as "blaß, mager und gleichgültig" (Rm.II.222), the "Bezirkshauptmann" is only able to conduct his business affairs in a mechanical way after he loses his faith in the stability of the monarchy:

Und Herr von Trotta gleich einem Virtuosen, in dem das Feuer erloschen, in dessen Seele es taub und leer geworden ist und dessen Finger nur noch in kalter, seit Jahren erworbener Dienstfertigkeit dank ihrem eigenen, toten Gedächtnis richtige Klänge erzeugen.
(Rm.II.238-9)

As we saw in the section on Zipper und sein Vater, what Roth effects by stressing the parallels between the lives of the two men is a representation in the structure of the novel of what Eikhenbaum termed "the constant tension between the unconscious and language...the internal dialectic of art." (2) By highlighting the similarities between the lives of Zipper and his son, Roth exploits the tension between temporality and timelessness. He presents a clear and ordered linear development and yet alerts the

(1) Compare Carl Joseph's reaction to the portrait.
(Rm.II.40)

(2) Boris Eikhenbaum. "Literatur and Cinema", in: Russian Formalism (ed.S.Bann and J.E.Bowl), Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1973, p.123

reader to the tendency of narrative to reduce human experience to a clear line of cause and effect by presenting the developments in the lives of father and son as circular movements, as a parody of real action. (1) The narrator continually re-asserts developments in the novel in relation to their final stage. After the "Bezirkshauptmann" has finally decided to give his son a free hand in determining the course of his own life, and has raised no objection to Carl Joseph's leaving the army, the narrator comments:

Er wußte nicht,...daß ihm das Schicksal bitteren Kummer spann, dieweil er schlief... Nein, der Bezirkshauptmann hatte noch nicht alles Bittere gekostet! (2) (Rm.II.241)

Carl Joseph's own reflections on the adequateness of his report of his encounter with Kapturak encapsulate and express what lies at the centre of the construction of the novel:

Aber er fühlte wohl, daß er nicht alles und nicht einmal das Wichtigste gesagt hatte und daß zwischen seinem Erlebnis und dem Bericht, den er erstattete, ein weiter und rätselhafter Abstand lag, gleichsam ein ganzes merkwürdiges Land. (Rm.II.255)

The reader is alerted to the fact that the medium of the traditional realist writer, discursive narrative, is deceptive because it posits the existence of a coherent and

(1) see David Bronsen. Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, p.402

In gleicher Weise ist der Lebenswandel des Enkels eine schwächere Wiederholung der Laufbahn des Großvaters.

(2) Through the theme of "Schicksal" Roth establishes the development of the novel in relation to ^{its} limits within the context of the fiction. Rm.II.252:

Er glaubte, die tückischen Schliche einer finsternen Macht zu erkennen,...allmählich sah er auch alle düsteren Ereignisse seines Lebens in einen düsteren Zusammenhang gefügt und abhängig von irgendeinem, gewaltigen, gehässigen, unsichtbaren Drahtzieher, dessen Ziel es war, den Leutnant zu vernichten.

stable world. The text of Roth's novel points beyond itself, making the reader aware of the limits of its possibilities. Radetzkymarsch rejects immanent criticism as the text establishes itself in relation to its limits, which appear as an absence around which the narrative diversity illustrated above is displayed. This diversity can be further illustrated by the narrator's description of the servant's reaction to the news of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Rumours of the assassination reach Chojnicki's house just as the "Sommerfest", planned by the garrison for many months, is finally disrupted by the storm which has been threatening to break during the preparations:

Der Diener brachte den Zufall des Gewitters mit der schrecklichen Kunde in einen übernatürlichen Zusammenhang. Er bedachte, daß die Stunde endlich gekommen sei, in der sich übernatürliche Gewalten der Welt deutlich und grausam kundgeben wollten. (Rm.II.286)

The narrative is saying two things at once. Roth uses the threat of the storm to create the atmosphere of the impending collapse of the monarchy: at the same time he draws attention to this device by incorporating the servant's reactions into the narrative. By thickening the line of his discourse and self-consciously drawing attention to the narrative devices he employs, Roth effectively undermines the image of reality as a series of acts which follow each other naturally. The narrator's description of Carl Joseph's reaction to the irreverence to the memory of Franz Ferdinand displayed by his comrades also has the effect of undermining the linearity of the discourse:

Er fühlte sich eins mit seinem Großvater. Er selbst war der Held von Solferino. (Rm.II.292)

Roth conveys the fundamental sterility of the Trotta family, and by implication of the Habsburg monarchy, by relating the lives of father and son in a parody of fruitful generation:

Er ist jung und töricht, dachte der Sohn. Er ist ein lieber, junger Tor mit weißen Haaren. Ich bin vielleicht sein Vater, der Held von Solferino. Ich bin alt geworden, er ist nur bejahrt. (Rm.II.297)

After he leaves the army, Carl Joseph returns for a brief period to the life-style of his ancestors:

Man lebte wie der Großvater, der Held von Solferino, und wie der Urgroßvater, der Invalide im Schloßpark von Laxenburg, und vielleicht wie die namenlosen, unbekannten Ahnen, die Bauern von Sipolje. (Rm.II.303)

Carl Joseph cannot find any personal fulfilment in determining the course of his own life: the only possibility open to him is to re-trace his ancestors' path.

Carl Joseph's death has been interpreted by many critics as the final expression of the futility of his existence.(1) Yet the youngest Trotta is doing no less than his grandfather did. The people he attempts to rescue are more humble than the Kaiser, but Carl Joseph acts out of the same necessity that compelled his more illustrious ancestor to risk his life in saving the Kaiser. The narrator describes how Carl Joseph becomes absorbed in his reminiscences and

(1) G. Lukács. "Radetzkmarsch", in: *Literaturnaja gazeta*, Moskva, 15.8.1939, trans. M. Enberg, in: Fritz Hackert. *Kulturpessimismus und Erzählform: Studien zu Joseph Roths Leben und Werk*, Herbert Lang, Bern, 1967, pp.147-151
Es bricht aber der Krieg aus und in einem der ersten Kämpfe fällt er ruhmlos. Die Ziellosigkeit und die Leere des Lebens sind charakteristisch sowohl für den Vater als auch für den Sohn.

see H. Scheible. *Joseph Roth. Mit einem Essay über Gustave Flaubert*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1971, p.131

is able to exclude the possibility of the very real threat to his life:

Es fiel ihm nicht ein, daß er getroffen werden könnte wie die anderen. Er hörte schon die Schüsse, die noch nicht gefallen waren, und gleichzeitig die ersten trommelnden Takte des Radetzkymarsches. Er stand auf dem Balkon des väterlichen Hauses. Unten spielte die Militärkapelle. (Rm.II.312)

Yet it was the "Held von Solferino's" awareness of his superiors' remoteness from the realities of the situation that motivated his action:

Und der ewige Groll des subalternen Frontoffiziers gegen die hohen Herren des Generalstabs, die keine Ahnung von der bitteren Praxis hatten, diktierte dem Leutnant jene Handlung,... (Rm.II.12)

By establishing a subsidiary relation between the circumstances surrounding Carl Joseph's death and those of his grandfather's rescue of the Kaiser, Roth undermines the linearity of the development of the narrative and expresses the spurious stability of the first generation. (1)

It is through the epilogue that the novel is finally established in relation to its limits. The narrator describes the "Bezirkshauptmann's" last days as follows:

Es bleibt uns nur noch übrig, von den letzten Tagen des Herrn Bezirkshauptmanns Trotta zu berichten... Und also war es ihm zuweilen, als lebte er nur noch ein zweites, ein blasserer Leben, und sein erstes

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- (1) The vocabulary used in the description of the circumstances of Carl Joseph's death is a parody of his former feelings. Compare Rm.II.32:

Am besten starb man für ihn bei Militärmusik, am leichtesten beim Radetzkymarsch. Die flinken Kugeln pfften im Takt um den Kopf Carl Josephs, sein blanker Säbel blitzte, und, Herz und Hirn erfüllt von der holden Hurligkeit des Marsches, sank er hin in den trommelnden Rausch der Musik, und sein Blut sickerte in einem dunkelroten und schmalen Streifen... and p.312:

Die Kugeln umpfften ihn,... Er hörte schon die Schüsse,...und gleichzeitig die ersten trommelnden Takte des Radetzkymarsches...

und echtes hätte er längst vorher beschlossen. Seine Tage - so schien es ihm - eilten nicht dem Grabe entgegen wie die Tage aller anderen Menschen. Versteinert, wie sein eigenes Grabmal, stand der Bezirkshauptmann am Ufer der Tage. (Rm.II.316)

Through the device of the epilogue Roth moves the novel outside itself, commenting directly on the closed factitiousness of the narrative he has presented to the reader. The linear development of the narrative, which links the beginning and the end in a single movement, creating an image of a stable and harmonious order, is undermined by the fact that the flow of chronological time is arrested. The discourse of the novel reflects in part the dual impulse that made Roth write it. The narrative breaks free from itself in the ways we have described because it is strained between the opposed determinations that were the conditions of its possibility. Roth was much too aware of the weaknesses of the Habsburg monarchy, as well as its strengths (1), to be able to re-create it in an image of certainty. (2) Roth's perplexity resides in the difference

(1) see also Joseph Roth. "Grillparzer. Ein Porträt.", Das Neue Tage-Buch, Paris, 4.12.1937, vol.IV., p.314
Der Untergang des großen, aber fühlbar restringierten und ständig im Zurückweichen begriffenen Reiches hat immer noch einen noblen Aspekt, trotz inneren Brüchen, Verfehlungen, Kleinlichkeiten, Fäulnissen.

(2) Bronsen indicates the instability of the traditions the Trotta family is trying to recapture.
Ähnlich geartet ist die Beziehung zur Tradition. Die immer wieder ersehnte Einkehr beim Großvater und darüber hinaus beim Kaiser ist als Ausdruck einer Hinwendung zu Ordnung und Tradition zu verstehen, welche jedoch nie in die Reichweite der Selbstüberzeugung gelangt, da es keine Tradition mehr gibt, in der die Enkel der Monarchie heimisch werden könnten.
op.cit. p.406

which separates the two endings of the novel - the narrative which does not parade its own devices, and the narrator's epilogue, which openly admits the closed circularity of the "Bezirkshauptmann's" life, and the finality of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire:

Ich bin unglücklich, verworren, ganz unfähig, aus den Mauern herauszukommen, die ich um mich und den Roman gebaut habe, oder sind es Berge vielmehr, zwischen denen ich wandle, voller Angst. An einem Tag ist Alles gelungen, am nächsten Alles Dreck. Tückisch und trügerisch ist Alles... Ich habe mich in die Vorkriegszeit retten wollen, aber es ist entsetzlich schwer, sie so zu erzählen, wie ich sie fühle. Ich fürchte, ich fürchte, ich bin ein Patzer. (1)

(1) Brief an Friedrich Traugott Gubler. Sonntag (1932) Joseph Roth. Briefe. 1911-1939 (ed. Hermann Kesten), Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970, p.218

Die Kapuzinergruft

By late 1937, when Roth was working on Die Kapuzinergruft, the sequel to Radetzkymarsch, the decline of the Habsburg empire, which he had traced so minutely in the earlier novel, was complete. The culmination of those days of uncertainty and turmoil came in March 1938 when Schnuschnigg was forced to resign and the new National Socialist government was installed. The values which Roth so prized, and which he considered had found their ultimate expression in the Habsburg monarchy, were now lost for ever.

Our examination of Die Kapuzinergruft will focus on the extent to which Roth's realization of the implications of historical developments set its unique stamp on the structure of the novel. Die Kapuzinergruft is a far less polished work than the earlier Radetzkymarsch, yet once again Roth's awareness of the clearly defined historical limits which circumscribe the domain of the novel imposes the curious, self-referential internality of the narrative perspective which we detected in Radetzkymarsch. The battery of artistic devices Roth deployed in Radetzky-marsch to highlight the operations of the narrative itself is considerably reduced in Die Kapuzinergruft. The later novel is cast in the form of a subjective reconstruction of historical events. We follow the fortunes of the scion of the Trotta family, Franz Ferdinand, as he relives the confused years which place him outside the

comforting boundaries of certainty. The novel emerges in a clear relation to an external necessity: as the domain of the future seems to be sealed off, the central impulse of the novel is an examination of the past. We shall see that the internal logic of Das falsche Gewicht presses the novel to its own limits and indicates the realms beyond. Die Kapuzinergruft, however, represents a retreat, a re-drawing of limits in accordance with the boundaries of personal experience. This uniquely private perspective is made apparent in the opening page of the novel by the first-person narrator, Franz Ferdinand Trotta:

In den verschollenen Annalen der alten österreichisch-ungarischen Armee aber ist unser Name verzeichnet und ich gestehe, daß ich stolz darauf bin, gerade deshalb, weil diese Annalen verschollen sind. (K.II.865)

Trotta's pride rests on the fact that his name falls outside the bounds of objectively defined history. Although Trotta's perspective is subjective, and the historical dimension is reduced in breadth to the mere disposition of an individual psyche, the first-person narrator does, however, alert the reader to the limits of the historical development which is presented in the novel. Trotta himself expresses this tension between a clear, penetrating historical understanding and a singularly inward-looking approach:

Ich bin feinhörig, aber ich spiele einen Schwerhörigen. Ich halte es für nobler, ein Gebrechen vorzutäuschen als zuzugeben, daß ich vulgäre Geräusche vernommen habe. (K.II.865)

In his recasting of historical events from a subjective viewpoint, Trotta continually draws our attention to his lack of awareness of the decisive phases of contemporary

history. His essential naiveté is encapsulated and expressed in the fact of his sleeping during daytime:

Aber ich war damals jung und töricht, um nicht zu sagen: leichtsinnig. Leichtfertig war ich auf jeden Fall. Ich lebte damals, wie man so sagt: in den Tag hinein. Nein! Dies ist falsch: ich lebte in die Nacht hinein; ich schlief in den Tag hinein. (K.II.866)

With the benefit of hindsight, Trotta diagnoses his own behaviour, and that of his contemporaries, as being symptomatic of the inevitable decline of the monarchy:

Ich teilte mit ihnen den skeptischen Leichtsinn, den melancholischen Fürwitz, die sündhafte Fahrlässigkeit, die hochmütige Verlorenheit, alle Anzeichen des Unterganges, den wir damals noch nicht kommen sahen. Über den Gläsern, aus denen wir übermütig tranken, kreuzte der unsichtbare Tod schon seine knochigen Hände. (1) (K.II.871)

As Trotta is precluded from taking any form of positive action by the historical limits imposed on the novel, his role is confined to that of a melancholy diagnostician of the ills of contemporary society:

Aber es sollte sich ja auch darauf zeigen, daß diese Sünden, die meine Freunde und ich auf unsere Häupter luden, gar nicht unsere persönliche waren, sondern nur die schwachen Vorzeichen der kommenden Vernichtung, von der ich bald erzählen werde. (K.II.877)

Trotta's attitude to the church, which he describes in a brief excursus near the beginning of the novel, can be

(1) This baroque image which foreshadows the decline of the monarchy occurs with dulling regularity throughout the novel. See K.II.884, 887, 891, 905. Further examples of Trotta's farsightedness can be found in K.II.896 and 908.

K.II.896: Ich war der einzige unter ihnen, der schon die Anzeichen des Todes in ihren harmlosen, sogar fröhlichen, jedenfalls unbewegten Gesichtern erkannte.

K.II.908: Wahrscheinlich war ich in jener Stunde der einzige, der die finstere Wucht des Kommenden fühlte, zum Unterschied und also im Gegensatz zu meinen Kameraden.

seen as a metaphor for his singularly private view of history:

Damals haßte ich die Kirche...wir rebellierten gegen die Formen der Tradition, denn wir wußten nicht, daß wahre Form mit dem Wesen identisch sei und daß es kindisch war, eines von dem andern zu trennen. (K.II.884)

In the same way that Trotta and his contemporaries distinguish between the outward trappings of religious observance and the essential nature and function of the church, so the politically naive Trotta can only distinguish the symptoms of contemporary society, and not diagnose the root causes of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is left to the cynical Chojnicki to give an ironic description of the dialectical relation between the nature of the Catholic church and the form of the monarchy:

"Die römische Kirche", so pflegte er zu sagen, "ist in dieser morschen Welt noch die einzige Formgeberin, Formhalterin. Ja, man kann sagen, Formspenderin. Indem sie das Traditionelle des sogenannten 'Althergebrachten' in der Dogmatik einsperrt wie in einem eisigen Palast, gewinnt und verleiht sie ihren Kindern die Freiheit, ringsum, außerhalb dieses Eispalastes, der einen weiten, geräumigen Vorhof hat, das Lässige zu treiben noch das Verbotene zu verzeihen, beziehungsweise zu führen." (K.II.885)

Trotta's function in the novel is the mere registration of the seismic shocks which gradually undermine the fabric of the Empire. He documents the idyllic, carefree existence before the First World War and describes the passing of this sense of security when the war sweeps the old society away. Trotta's uniquely private perspective on historical events is made apparent in his appraisal of the fall of the monarchy, which he expresses in terms of a purely personal loss:

Viel später erst, lange nach dem großen Krieg, den

man den "Weltkrieg" nennt, mit Recht, meiner Meinung nach, und zwar nicht etwa, weil ihn die ganze Welt geführt hatte, sondern weil wir alle infolge seiner eine Welt, unsere Welt, verloren haben,... (K.II.890)

Trotta's nostalgia for the monarchy amounts to no more than an acute sense of loss for an institution which contributed in large measure to his feeling of personal security and well-being.

Ich spreche vom mißverstandenen und auch mißbrauchten Geist der alten Monarchie, der da bewirkte, daß ich in Zlotograd ebenso zu Hause war wie in Sipolje, wie in Wien. (K.II.890)

Even the outbreak of war is seen exclusively in terms of the impact it makes on Trotta's life: he makes no attempt to understand its broader significance. War provides Trotta and his contemporaries with a way out of their present meaningless existence:

In dem Augenblick, in dem er nun da war und unausbleiblich, erkannte ich sofort - und ich glaube, auch alle meine Freunde dürften es genauso schnell und so plötzlich erkannt haben -, daß sogar ein sinnloser Tod besser sei als ein sinnloses Leben. (K.II.896)

With the benefit of hindsight, the narrator contrasts the limited perspective of his circle with the Jewish coachman Manes Reisiger's keen awareness of the consequences of war.

Und weit hell-sichtiger als meine Freunde...fuhr er also fort: "Es wird ein großer Krieg sein, ein langer, und wer von uns dreien zurückkommt, kann man nicht wissen." (K.II.897-8)

History is seen as a purely external limit, restricting the scope of individual action. The narrator describes how the outbreak of war has put an abrupt end to Kapturak's trade in smuggling deserters from the Russian army. Historical events are not viewed as the inevitable outcome of

a series of historical phases. History takes on the form of an inevitable destiny as people are sacrificed to the whims of fate:

Der arme Jadlowker...sah heute aus wie ein Mensch, der seine ganze Vergangenheit liquidieren muß; ein Opfer der Weltgeschichte eben... Alles Private war auf einmal in den Bereich des Öffentlichen getreten. Es repräsentierte das Öffentliche, es vertrat und symbolisierte es. (K.II.899)

Trotta's undialectical approach to history is made apparent in his assessment of the arbitrary nature of the profound changes taking place in contemporary society. Historical events are only considered significant to the extent that they are represented through the lives of individual characters. The static, unmediated relationship is expressed in Trotta's vocabulary, which does not admit of interaction between the spheres of the public and the private, - "repräsentierte", "vertrat", "symbolisierte". Trotta's tendency to translate dynamic historical forces into the static disposition of an individual psyche, to view them as existing outside the field created by the mediation between subject and object, particular and universal, has important implications for the form of the novel. Trotta is too close to events, too much involved in the changes that are overtaking society, to be able to stand back and recognize the necessity that determines the forces of change in the declining monarchy. The only path open to him is to confront the forces of history with the limited range of his own experience:

Gerne nehme ich das Schicksal, ein Verschollener zu sein, auf mich, aber nicht jenes, der Erzähler der Verschollenen zu werden. Man könnte mich kaum noch verstehen, wenn ich es etwa unternähme, heutzutage

von der Freiheit zu sprechen, von der Ehre, geschweige denn von der Gefangenschaft. In diesen Jahren schweigt man besser. Ich schreibe lediglich zu dem Zweck, um mir selbst klarzuwerden; und auch pro nomine Dei sozusagen. Er verzeihe mir die Sünde! (K.II.924)

If Trotta doubts the capacity of the modern reader to understand the ethos of the monarchy, then it is largely because of his own inability as a narrator to identify the factors which constituted the Empire and determined its demise. Trotta, like Jadlowker, can merely represent historical forces, the factors determining the decisive phases in Austrian history have the same indefinite, elusive quality about them as Trotta's native Vienna on the eve of his departure for the front:

Ja, die vertraute Stadt entzog sich mir, rückte von mir fort, jeden Augenblick weiter, und die Straßen und Gassen und Gärten,...schienen mir bereits ausgestorben, so, wie ich sie später sehen sollte, nach dem Krieg und nach unserer Heimkehr. (K.II.915)

As Trotta cannot uncover the logic of the demise of the monarchy, his narrative amounts to no more than a repetition of the essential quality of his personal experience. The absence of the perspective of historical development is expressed in the context of the fiction through the sterility of the post-war generation to which Trotta belongs. As history is seen as an inevitable destiny, not admitting of decisive human action for change, the unproductive idyll of the pre-war generation cedes to a profound realization of the complete inability of the post-war generation to take decisive role in the shaping of its own future. Trotta's marriage to Elisabeth is as much the result of the outbreak of war as of mutual

desire. (1) The idea of marriage is inextricably bound up with the thoughts of death which Trotta harbours on hearing the news of the outbreak of war:

Ich hatte nur zwei Gedanken, seitdem ich das Manifest des Kaisers gelesen hatte: den an den Tod und den an Elisabeth. (K.II.900)

The complete inability of Trotta and his contemporaries to take decisive action regarding the course of their own lives is made apparent in their attitude to personal relationships. The rapid marriages which succeed the outbreak of war are merely indications of Trotta and his friends' sense of their own mortality: as they view the forces of history as moving inexorably outwith their control, any impulse towards personal development has been extinguished. Trotta's circle of friends remains literally and metaphorically unproductive:

In uns aber, dem seit Geburt kriegsgeweihten Geschlecht, war der Fortpflanzungstrieb sichtbar erloschen. Wir hatten keinerlei Lust, uns fortzusetzen. (K.II.905)

Trotta's response to contemporary historical development is a vague gesture of resignation in the face of death, but this impulse too must remain unfulfilled. Trotta and his circle survive the war and return only to find that the society which had accommodated their essential lack of purpose had disappeared for good:

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- (1) Compare Die weißen Städte (no date. Vol.III, 880-934) p.881: Nur wir, nur unsere Generation, erlebte das Erdbeben, nachdem sie mit der vollständigen Sicherheit der Erde seit der Geburt gerechnet hatte. Uns allen war es, wie einem, der sich in den Zug setzt, den Fahrplan in der Hand, um in die Welt zu reisen. Aber ein Sturm blies unser Gefährt in die Weite, und wir waren in einem Augenblick dort, wohin wir in gemächlichen und bunten, erschütternden und zauberhaften zehn Jahren hatten kommen wollen. Ehe wir noch erleben konnten, erfuhren wir's.

Ich fühlte mich wohl, ich war wieder zu Hause. Wir hatten alle Stand und Rang und Namen, Haus und Geld und Wert verloren, Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft. Jeden Morgen, wenn wir erwachten,...fluchten wir den Tod, der uns zu seinem gewaltigen Fest vergeblich gelockt hatte... Wir aber waren heillos unfruchtbar heimgekehrt, mit lahmen Lenden, ein todgeweihtes Geschlecht, das der Tod verschmäht hatte. (K.II.952)

As the realms of past and future have been sealed off by the war, the present provides the only refuge for Trotta and his contemporaries. Once again Trotta establishes no connexion between the private troubles of individuals and the broader sphere of far-reaching historical change:

Wir begannen, unsern Jammer sogar zu lieben,... Wir vergruben uns geradezu in ihn. Wir waren ihm dankbar, weil er unsere kleinen, besonderen, persönlichen Kummernisse verschlang, er, ihr großer Bruder, der große Jammer,... (K.II.953)

Once again historical developments are viewed from a purely personal perspective, as an escape from private difficulties. Trotta's initial surprise at how life in his mother's house continues just as it did before the war which had changed contemporary society so dramatically, cedes to a resigned withdrawal from all interest in public affairs:

Hatte ich mich doch längst schon daran gewöhnt, alle Ereignisse, die von den Zeitungen "historische" genannt werden, mit dem gerechten Blick eines nicht mehr zu dieser Welt gehörenden zu betrachten!... Was gingen mich noch die Dinge dieser Welt an?... (1) (K.II.978)

On the eve of the National Socialist take-over, Trotta

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- (1) Alan Bance has indicated how Trotta's withdrawal from public affairs is reflected in his subjective reconstruction of historical events. See Die Kapuzinergruft, Introduction and notes to the Harrap edition, London, 1972, p.144:

Reality, it seems, has become so subjective for Trotta that memory adjusts the past to suit his personal preference: the autumnal mood is a projection of his own state of mind.

once again protests his remoteness from what is happening in the society around him:

Ich war ausgeschaltet; ausgeschaltet war ich. Ausgeschaltet unter den Lebendigen bedeutet so etwas Ähnliches wie exterritorial. Ein Exterritorialer war ich eben unter den Lebenden. (K.II.979)

The assumption which underlies Trotta's narrative stance is a re-formulation of Roth's statements in his essay

Die weißen Städte:

Ich kann nur erzählen, was in mir vorging und wie ich es erlebte. (1)

The interiority of Trotta's narrative perspective becomes even more pronounced as the events in the novel overlap with the time when Roth was working on it. Roth was too much aware of the difficulties of attempting to arrest the content of developments which the observer himself could barely understand. He had expressed his doubts about the power of language to arrest the motive content of a changing world in Die weißen Städte:

Der "gute Beobachter" ist der traurigste Berichterstatter. Alles Wandelbare begreift er mit offenem, aber starrem Aug'. Er lauscht nicht in sich selbst. Das aber müßte er. Er könnte dann wenigstens von seinen Stimmen berichten. Er verzeichnet die Stimme einer Sekunde in seiner Umgebung. Aber wer weiß nicht, daß andere Stimmen ertönen, sobald er seine Horcherstellung verlassen hat. Und ehe er's niederschreibt, ist die Welt, die er kennt, nicht mehr dieselbe. (2)

Roth's sense of uncomprehending despair at the chain of events which overtook Austria in 1937-8 dictated the form of the narrative, its subjective dimension. Like Roth, Trotta was too close to the dramatic changes which

(1) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.882

(2) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, pp.881-2

Austrian society was undergoing to be able to distance himself from them and present the reader with a more coherent, clear picture of what was in fact happening. Unable to comment authoritatively on the present, Trotta summons up a vision of the past, an order of security which does not seem to elude definition:

Ich gehöre heute noch -...einer offenbar versunkenen Welt an, in der es selbstverständlich schien, daß ein Volk regiert werde und daß es also, wollte es nicht aufhören, Volk zu sein, sich nicht selber regieren könne. (K.II.980)

Yet it would be wrong to construe Die Kapuzinergruft as the expression of Roth's naive desire to return to the security of the Habsburg past. The monarchy does not provide a final retreat within the context of the fiction. Trotta's final question -"Wohin soll ich, ich jetzt, ein Trotta?..." (K.II.982) relates the novel to the conditions of its possibility. It acts as a counter to Trotta's tendency as a narrator to conjure up an image of the secure Habsburg era to set against the uncertainties of the present. In leaving the final question unanswered, Trotta and his creator Roth acknowledge that in the circumstances it is impossible to project future developments from the bleak perspective of 1938.

Chapter IX.

Tarabas

Der Berichterstatter erst ist nicht zufällig anwesend, ist nicht unpersönlich. Auch er ist subjektiv. Aber er trägt die Verantwortung für seine Subjektivität. Sie ist eine aktive, keine zufällige, sondern eine persönliche. Erst das Bild, das er vom Ereignis entwirft, vermittelt seine Vorstellung von dem Ereignis - und nicht von ihm. Der Augenzeuge steht sichtbar neben und vor seiner Mitteilung. Der Berichterstatter verschwindet hinter seinem Bericht. (1)

The opening paragraph of Roth's Tarabas (1934) presents a curious amalgam of the two narrative techniques which Roth outlined in his essay Schluß mit der "Neuen Sachlichkeit"! (1930) (see note 1). The important circumstances in Nikolaus Tarabas' life are pared down to their significant lines and stated in the context of objective time - a device which serves to underline the implied authenticity of the details presented. The presence of details whose function is to substantiate the bare structure of the narrative brings Roth's preface to Die Flucht ohne Ende to mind, in which he disparages the myth of artistic creation:

Ich habe nichts erfunden, nichts komponiert. Es handelt sich nicht mehr darum, zu "dichten". Das wichtigste ist das Beobachtete. (2)

Yet unlike the "Berichterstatter" of the model outlined in Schluß mit der "Neuen Sachlichkeit"!, the narrator does

(1) "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit'!", Die Literarische Welt, 17. u. 24.1.1930, vol.IV., p.248

(2) Foreword to Die Flucht ohne Ende, vol.I., p.317

not "disappear" behind his report. (1) The narrator establishes the temporal distance which separates him from the events he is describing: his own subjectivity and his role as distanced commentator are important constitutive elements of the report. The narrator comments of Tarabas:

Er entstammte einer jener Nationen, die damals noch der große Zar beherrschte und die man heute als "westliche Randvölker" bezeichnet. (T.II.327)

By advertising his role as an informed commentator looking back, the narrator effectively draws the readers' attention to the absence of a single temporal dimension within the narrative.

The fortune teller's prophecy in the opening pages of the novel sketches out the broad lines of development in Tarabas' life as it is presented to the reader:

"...Ich lese in Ihrer Hand, daß Sie ein Mörder sind und ein Heiliger! Ein unglücklicheres Schicksal gibt es nicht auf dieser Welt. Sie werden sündigen und büßen - alles noch auf Erden." (T.II.330)

The broad outlines of the development of the novel are sketched in from the beginning. The narrative device of the prophecy emphasizes the possibility of a double movement in the text which at once reveals and conceals the outlines of the development. As we saw in the section on Die Flucht ohne Ende, it is by consciously relating the future to the present that Roth works against the narrow conception of the novel as a means of reducing a re-

(1) In the section on Die Flucht ohne Ende we saw that the "Berichterstatter", the narrator does not disappear behind his report either. He in fact plays an important constitutive role in the structuring of the narrative.

production of reality to a point in time, or to a series of acts in time. The linear development of the narrative, which links the beginning and the end in a single movement, creating an image of a stable and harmonious order, is undermined by the fact that the flow of chronological time is momentarily arrested. Tarabas' encounter with the "Wahrsagerin" is at first treated as a diversion by the narrator:

Eines Abends beging er eine Gewalttat, die den Lauf seines Lebens verändern sollte. Vorher aber geschah folgendes: (T.II.328)

The narrator's authoritative description of Tarabas' state of mind shortly after his arrival in America encapsulates and expresses the possibility of a double movement within the text, a parody of development which reverses the direction of the apparent progress of the narrative:

Obwohl die Welt noch vor ihm lag, schien es ihm manchmal, sie läge hinter ihm bereits. Zuweilen fühlte er sich wie ein alter Mann, der sich nach einem verlorenen Leben sehnt und dem keine Zeit mehr bleibt, ein neues anzufangen. (T.II.327)

Although the novel takes the form of a chronicle of Nikolaus Tarabas' life, it is not derived monolithically from a unique and simple conception. The device of the prophecy ensures that the novel is both totally transparent (the gypsy's predictions are fulfilled), and totally opaque (the manner of their fulfillment is only gradually revealed). The narrator's comment on Tarabas' immediate acceptance of the gypsy's prophecy only serves to emphasize the extent to which the narrative emerges in relation to its limits:

Ich werde also - dachte Tarabas - zuerst ein Mörder werden und dann ein Heiliger. (Es war nicht möglich, dem Schicksal, das gewiß ohne Rücksicht auf Tarabas

seine Fäden spann, gewissermaßen auf halbem Wege entgegenzukommen und also das Leben vom nächsten Augenblick an freiwillingig zu verändern). (T.II.330-1)

As we have seen, the narrator views the action from a distanced perspective. The events he is describing, and the thoughts and feelings of the characters involved have receded into the past, and are now open to distanced and authoritative comment. The narrator takes on the role of the shadowy figure of Eduard P. who appears as a distanced commentator towards the end of Zipper und sein Vater. The narrator in Zipper und sein Vater describes him as follows:

Er wandelt...an den Rändern der Ereignisse. Er säumte sie ein gewissermaßen. Von außen her und als gehörte er nicht zu dieser Welt, nahm er Stellung zu ihr und ihren Vorgängen. (Z.I.520)

Time and time again the narrator in Tarabas comments on the significance of events in the novel, and points towards developments of which the characters are necessarily unaware. The narrator makes it clear that Tarabas' father's belief that the war which has brought his son home again will only last for three weeks, is quite unfounded:

...und nicht für einen Augenblick wurde ihm klar, daß der finstere Tod schon seine hageren Hände über dem ganzen Lande kreuzte und auch über Nikolaus, seinem Sohn. (T.II.342)

The narrator not only comments directly on the naive and unfounded hopes of the characters, he is also moved to make more general statements about the human condition. Tarabas' ability to forget the series of events which had lead to his rapid departure from America, provokes the

narrator to the following reflections:

Die Herzen kühner, törichter und leicht berauschter Menschen sind unergründlich; nächtliche Brunnen sind es, in denen die Gedanken, die Gefühle,...die Hoffnungen, ja die Reue selbst versinken können und zeitweise auch die Furcht vor Gott. (T.II.337)

It is through the role of the narrator that the dialectic which informs the structure of the work emerges. As we have seen, his position as commentator implies the breakdown of a single temporal dimension within the novel. The content of the novel is thus seen to emerge in relation to its form. Tarabas' fundamental estrangement from the social order emerges as a disruption of the conventional forms through which the individual's relationship to the circumstances of his social existence is perceived. Instead of perceiving one event as following naturally upon another, in a smooth and unbroken sequence, Tarabas, as we have seen, experiences time as a series of existential moments, lacking in the fluid continuity that might be said to characterize a more stable and secure existence.(1) The outbreak of war, an event which intervenes so dramatically in Tarabas' personal history, completely wipes out the memory of the events which made his departure from New York a matter of such urgency:

Hierauf, nachdem ihm Auskunft zuteil geworden, rannte er, mit langen Schritten, der Botschaft entgegen, dem Krieg entgegen. Und Katherina, der Wirt und seine Missetat waren ausgelöscht und vergessen. (T.II.337)

The structure of Tarabas' experience, confused and unin-

(1) see Zipper und sein Vater. We saw how the clear ordered, linear development of Zipper's life was emphasized by frequent references by the narrator to the flow of chronological time. See for example Z.I.426.

telligible though it may appear to him, can be said to reside in the very space of the difference between two opposing temporal dimensions. Tarabas, "ein Gast auf dieser Erde", as the subtitle of the novel describes him, cannot locate himself within the flow of history. It is the narrator in his role as commentator who weaves into an intelligible pattern the tenuous threads of Tarabas' experience of the world as essentially alien and mysterious. Shortly after Tarabas' reunion with his family the narrator comments how Tarabas has become dislocated from all that was once so familiar to him. The daily routine of his parent's environment seems curiously remote from him:

Er wunderte sich, daß Haus, Hof, Land, Vater und Mutter ihm näher gewesen waren im weiten, steinernen New York als hier, und obwohl er doch hierhergekommen war, sie zu umarmen und seinem Herzen nahe zu fühlen. (T.II.343)

Estranged from what had once been such a familiar environment, Tarabas' only chance for survival is to immerse himself in the confusion of war, and to create for himself a new image of reality more finely attuned to his needs. The narrator comments how war becomes a substitute for the home which has become so remote:

Der Krieg wurde seine Heimat. Der Krieg wurde seine große, blutige Heimat. (T.II.347)

The dominance Tarabas exerts over his new environment is expressed through the medium of the narrator's description of his behaviour. No longer the passive victim of fate, Tarabas is viewed as the initiator, as the narrator describes his activities through a series of active verbs:

Er kam in friedliches Gebiet, setzte Dörfer in Brand, ließ die Trümmer kleinerer und größerer Städte zurück... Er kehrte um, erlebte die Unrast auf der Flucht vor dem Feind, nahm Rache...zerstörte Brücken,...gehorchte und befahl, und alles mit gleicher Lust. (T.II.347)

As the narrator comments, Tarabas' moments of insight into his own situation are fleeting:

...ward es Tarabas sekundenlang (aber auch nur so lange) klar, daß er seit der Stunde, in der ihm die Zigeunerin auf dem New Yorker Jahrmarkt geweissagt hatte, als ein Verwandelter lebte, ein Verwandelter, ein Verzauberter und wie in einem Traum Befangener. Ach, es war nicht sein Leben mehr! (T.II.348)

Through the image of the dream the narrator conveys the extent to which Tarabas superimposes his own conception of reality upon the external circumstances of his life. The fact that Tarabas' insights into his own situation are of such short duration leads him to construct for himself a more coherent reality, in a desperate bid to efface the sprawling fragmented environment which is essentially alien to him:

In diesen Augenblicken genoß er manchmal die Vorstellung, er sei ja überhaupt selbst schon tot: alles, was er da erfuhr, geschähe im Jenseits; und die anderen, die Gefallenen, seien so gewiß in ein drittes Leben eingekehrt wie er selbst nunmehr in sein zweites. (T.II.348-9)

In the confusion which succeeds the collapse of Tsarist-Russia, in the face of an increasingly fragmented environment, Tarabas' only hope for survival is to perpetuate the conditions which gave his life some meaning, to immerse himself in the rigours of army life which had given some structure to his existence:

...er war keineswegs entschlossen, den Untergang seiner Welt, das Ende des Krieges, anzuerkennen... Er hatte seine sechsundzwanzig Getreuen hierhergebracht, die sechsundzwanzig, denen der Krieg, wie ihm selber, die

einzigste Heimat gewesen war und denen er, wie sich selbst, eine neue Heimat schuldete. (T.II.354)

As we saw in the section on Zipper und sein Vater, the extent to which a character becomes dislocated from his external circumstances is reflected in the extent to which he retreats into a private realm of subjective time: the flow of external events thus ceases to have any meaning for Tarabas:

Die Weltgeschichte, die da von alten Vaterländern winzige neue absplitteln ließ, ging den Hauptmann Tarabas gar nichts an. Solange er lebte, wollte er den sogenannten Willen der Geschichte nicht kennen.(1)
(T.II.354)

Gradually external pressures threaten the existence of the private realm which Tarabas has created in his own image.(2) Tarabas' retreat into his own subjectivity only provides him with a mode of perception. As it is totally divorced from the sweeping changes which are overtaking the society around him, it provides no guidelines for action in the external environment. Tarabas' reaction to the pressures exerted upon him by his superior, General Labukeit, is to seek refuge in his own past, to re-capture the stability of his childhood:

Eine kurze Weile verlor er sich in Erinnerungen an seine Kinderzeit, und er wußte zugleich, daß er nur vor dieser Stunde floh, zurück in die Vergangenheit rettete er sich, der gewaltige Tarabas,... (T.II.379)

The disintegration of what had been a more harmonious

(1) See also T.II.356:

Der Hauptmann Tarabas kümmerte sich ebensowenig um die Gesetze der Geschichte wie die Bewohner des Städtchens Koropta.

(2) See also T.II.357:

Alle zusammen waren sie gleichsam sechsundzwanzig Tarabasse, sechsundzwanzig Ebenbilder des großen Nikolaus Tarabas, und ohne ihn unmöglich. Seine sechsundzwanzig Spiegelbilder waren sie eben.
(my emphasis)

reality leaves him as despondent and superfluous as Franz Tunda, the central character in Die Flucht ohne Ende:

Die ganze Welt hatte Tarabas verlassen. Vergessen und ausgespuckt hatte ihn die Welt. Zu Ende war der Krieg. Der Krieg selbst hatte Tarabas verlassen. Keine Gefahr mehr wartete auf ihn. (T.II.382)

The crisis point for Tarabas, which leads inevitably to the collapse of his private realm, is when the set of values he has imposed upon reality comes into direct conflict with an opposing set of values. The narrator however makes it clear that the religious frenzy of the soldiers and peasants, which reaches a climax during the long drinking bout, is also at base irrational; the vision of the Virgin Mary which appears so miraculously on the wall at Kristianpoller's inn, acts as a unifying force, a refuge for Tarabas' troops in the face of a hostile and chaotic environment. The fanaticism which leads the soldiers to attack the Jews appears incomprehensible to them after the event:

Nun, da sie aus ihrem Rausch erwachten, konnten sie sich zwar an alle Vorgänge dieses sonderlichen und furchtbaren Tages erinnern, aber sie wußten keine Erklärung für den bösen Zauber, dem sie erlegen waren. (T.II.406)

The extent to which Tarabas loses control of his private army, of his twenty six dedicated followers, is a measure of the erosion of the more solid image of reality he had attempted to impose upon his confused and fragmentary environment. The narrator makes it clear that the erosion of the set of values which Tarabas had imposed on external reality is paralleled by the emergence of a fragmented concept of self:

Es war nicht mehr der fürchterliche Oberst Tarabas, der da schwieg und zu überlegen begann. Es war der längst totgeglaubte, der junge Tarabas, einst ein Revolutionär,...der weiche und leidenschaftliche Tarabas, der rebellische Sohn eines steinernen Vaters,...aber auch der ewig unfertige Tarabas, dem die Sinne den Kopf verwirrten, der sich den Ereignissen auslieferte, wie sie gerade kamen: (T.II.413)

The revelation of the image of the Virgin Mary in Kristianpoller's inn, and the destruction of the Jews in Koropta bring Tarabas to a brief realization of the true nature of his situation. The narrator's succinct summary of the situation -

Er ist in Wirklichkeit niemals ein Held gewesen.
Er hat Mut bewiesen, weil sein Leben nichts wert
ist. (T.II.423) -

is followed by Tarabas' own expression of his insight into his position:

Es ist ein verdorbenes Leben, Tarabas, das du seit
Jahren führst! (T.II.423)

Once again the narrator expresses the extent to which Tarabas is torn between two conflicting determinations within his own personality through the image of the Doppelgänger:

Bald war es ihm, als gäbe es in der Tat zwei Tarabasse. Von denen stand einer in einem schäbigen, aschgrauen Rock vor dem Tisch; hier saß der gewaltige Tarabas, bewaffnet, in Uniform, mit Orden, gestiefelt und gespornt. (T.II.423)

The gradual erosion of Tarabas' sense of identity, which, as we have seen, is expressed by the narrator on several occasions, is a token of the diversity which gives the novel both its form and content. The structure of the novel resides in the relation between two opposing poles, two distinct levels of reality which are in constant tension. We have already seen how the linear simplicity

of the narrative is in fact undermined by the absence of a single temporal dimension within the work. There is however yet another set of opposing determinations which undermines our conception of the narrative as a thin line of discourse, linking the end to the beginning in a single movement. The sequential development of the plot, underlined by the role the gypsy's prophecy plays in the personal history of Tarabas, is in fact constituted in a complex and often contradictory way. The sequence of the plot is in fact strained between two extremes of necessity and freedom. The narrator as authoritative commentator highlights those elements of unavoidable compulsion which inform the development of the narrative. As we have seen, the main impulse of the novel is related to the unfolding of the prophecy. Yet there are even different dimensions within the sphere of authoritative narration. We have already shown how in unfolding and illustrating the meaning of Tarabas' life the narrator re-establishes the novel in relation to its conclusion. Yet the narrator also moves the novel outside itself, relating it to the ideological base which forms the conditions of its possibility. By testifying to the continuity of anti-semitism, the narrator not only sets Tarabas' behaviour in an historical context, he alerts the reader to the presence of ideological factors outside the domain of the novel:

Die ganze große Mauer, die unüberwindliche Mauer aus blankem Eis und geschliffenem Haß, aus Mißtrauen und Fremdheit, die heute noch, wie vor tausenden Jahren, zwischen Christen und Juden steht, als wäre sie von Gott selbst aufgerichtet, erhob sich vor Tarabas' Augen. (T.II.412)

The effect of relating the novel to conditions outside its domain is to alert the reader to the closed factitiousness of the narrative. We will examine this aspect later in relation to the function of the epilogue.

Yet, as we have seen, the novel is not comprised of a single series of conditions: set against the gradual evolution of developments encapsulated and expressed in the device of the prophecy, which announces the apparent design of the novel, we find that element of freedom which restores the novel's fundamental complexity. As we have seen, Tarabas, and to a more limited extent the soldiers in his entourage, react to the unfolding of developments beyond their control by constructing their own images of reality. Yet the nature of Tarabas' private realm is, of course, not purely fortuitous: - the elements of freedom and necessity are in constant dialectical tension - but it does constitute an element of genuine diversity. The bloody campaigns of the war and its aftermath provide Tarabas' only avenue of escape. The substance of the novel is thus seen to emerge as a relation between these two poles. The structure of the novel, this relation between two different elements, is encapsulated and expressed through the motif of the journey, which has a dual function in Tarabas. At one level, the journey is a metaphor for the individual's sense of dislocation from his environment. As there is no immediate opportunity to demonstrate his repentance in the wake of the havoc he has created around him, the only route open to Tarabas

is to move beyond these conditions; to retreat still further into his private realm seems to be the only way in which he can remedy the misfortune he has caused. The journey also becomes a metaphor for Tarabas' movement towards a greater awareness of his situation as he realizes how ineffectual his action has been:

...da hat nun so ein Mann großartig gelebt, ein mächtiger Tarabas, und hat gedacht, ohne ihn würde die Welt ihr Angesicht verändern! Aber nun bin ich aus der Welt geschieden - und sie hat ihr altes Aussehn nicht im geringsten verändert. Nichts bedeutet ihr ein Mensch; (T.II.438)

Yet unlike Franz Tunda, the hero of Die Flucht ohne Ende, Tarabas takes decisive action on the basis of his realization; he seeks to impose himself on the world which has rejected him by attempting to compensate for the physical and psychological injury he caused the Jew Schemarjah.

The dialectical tension between freedom and necessity, which we have already described as constituting the structure of the novel, is encapsulated and expressed by the narrator's description of how Tarabas reacts to the realization that he has, in a certain limited sense, fulfilled the gypsy's prophecy:

Es war ihm in diesem Augenblick, als hätte er eine unendlich schwere Bürde auf den Rücken genommen, aber zugleich auch, als wäre er von einer noch unsäglicher drückenden befreit worden. Er befand sich in dem Zustand eines Menschen, der, seit undenklichen Jahren verurteilt, eine Last aufzuheben, die zu seinen Füßen liegt, sich endlich von dieser Last be-schwert weiß, ohne daß er sie sich selbst aufgeladen hätte; (T.II.430-1)

As we have seen, even within what we have described as the primary impulse of the novel, the gypsy's prophecy, there exists an element of freedom: the real complexity

within the primary impulse emerges as the dual effect of what is perceived to be the fulfilment of the prophecy. Tarabas feels at once burdened by what he sees as the realization of the gypsy's predictions, and curiously liberated by the same set of circumstances. The reader is thus alerted to the essential duality of the model which was originally presented to him as the single intention, the primary impulse of the novel. Through Tarabas' reaction we are guided to a more profound understanding of the real conditions of the work. We saw earlier how the absence of a clear line of chronological development (made possible by the role of the authoritative narrator), undermined the linear development of the narrative, and thus the image of the stable and harmonious reality it presented. Similarly, through his descriptions of Tarabas' reactions, the narrator draws our attention to the real diversity which constitutes the structure of the novel. The spurious simplicity of the gypsy's prophecy is undermined as the reader is alerted to the fact that the substance of Tarabas is a relation between several diverse elements. A careful reading of Tarabas will substitute analysis, the resolution of the work into its component parts, and an examination of the relations between these parts, for genesis, which in this context is merely the reduction of the complexities of the novel to a simple line of discourse.

We have already noted the relationship between the elements of freedom and necessity in connexion with the

observation that the nature of Tarabas' private realm is not completely fortuitous. This dialectical tension is once again expressed through the motif of the journey. This can perhaps best be illustrated by means of a simple parallel. The novel is constructed in a conscious relation to its primary impulse, to what it emerged from. Similarly, Tarabas' journey, which is at base a movement away from the havoc which succeeded the fulfilment of the gypsy's prophecy, also leads back to its starting point. The narrator documents how Tarabas is prompted to visit his relatives, to return to his place of origin:

Eines Tages, es war schon Ende Mai, glaubte Tarabas, daß es an der Zeit sei, heimzuehn und Vater, Mutter und die Schwester wiederzusehn. (T.II.450)

Tarabas' journey is motivated to some extent by the fulfilment of the gypsy's prophecy. The narrator describes how Tarabas, totally alienated from his environment, attempts to return home, yet finds that his home has also become unfamiliar to him:

...denn man muß gerüstet sein, um die Heimat wiederzusehn. Von der ganzen Welt war Tarabas getrennt. Aber Angst hatte er noch, die Heimat zu besuchen. (T.II.450-1)

Yet the journey also becomes a metaphor for a gradual movement away from the original determined line of narrative, the fulfilment of the prophecy.

The dialectical tension between freedom and necessity is also expressed through the medium used to describe Tarabas' journey. The narrator, once again adopting the role of an authoritative commentator, sets Tarabas' journey in a broad historical context. Chapter XXII. opens with

a general description of the conditions which Tarabas, like the many others before and after him, will find on his journey. The narrator again advertises his role as an informed commentator looking back, once again drawing the readers' attention to the absence of a single temporal dimension within the narrative:

Auch heute noch, nach dem großen Krieg und nach der großen Revolution, obwohl die Maschinen ihren unheimlichen, stählernen und präzisen Gang nach dem Osten Europas angetreten haben, sind die Menschen dem fremden Elend zugetan. (T.II.435)

The use of the present tense effects a subtle transformation of the initial design of the novel, a transformation which parallels the development of the hero, which is, as we have seen, both constrained and free. Tarabas' gradual movement towards an increased awareness of his situation is highlighted by the use of the present tense. (1) Complementing the role of the narrator as a commentator who breaks down the single temporal dimension implied by the narrative, the present tense also transcends the closed, carefully structured realm of substantial acts expressed through the medium of the narrative tense. In deviating from its primary impulse, the lines of development sketched out by the gypsy's prophecy, the novel advertises the plurality of its voices, once again illustrating the diversity which gives Tarabas both its form and content. This deviation within the novel itself, the exhibition of the diversity within the text, alerts the reader to the

(1) Compare the use of the present tense to express Franz Tunda's gradual movement towards greater self-awareness in Die Flucht ohne Ende, chp.IV., p.107

closed factitiousness of the enabling model - the gradual unfolding of the fortune teller's predictions. The fact that Tarabas' new insights are expressed in the first person is a measure of the extent to which he has become aware of his situation, and is able to re-interpret his past actions in a new light. As we saw in the section on Die Flucht ohne Ende, the role of the narrator as an authoritative commentator diminishes in importance as the characters move towards greater self-realization. Alienated from the environment in which he had sought refuge, Tarabas is able to express his perception of the essential falsity of the image he had created for himself:

Ja, du bist der echte Tarabas! sagte Tarabas dann... Manche haben gewußt, Tarabas, daß du die Welt betrügst und dich selbst. Es war nicht dein Rang, den du gewaltig spazierenführtest, eine Maskerade war deine Uniform. So, wie du jetzt bist, gefälltst du mir, Tarabas! (T.II.446)

Tarabas' movement towards a more profound self-knowledge emerges as a dialectical relation to the expressive medium of the novel: the diversity which we have seen to be so characteristic of Tarabas alerts the reader to the elusiveness of absolute truth in the guise of a false simplicity. The intelligible image of the novel's structure is as fragile and multifaceted as Tarabas' image of himself:

Aber es war Tarabas, als hätte der Pfarrer etwa gesagt: Ich weiß, wie es um dich steht, mein Sohn! Du bist verworren und ratlos. Du bist ein Mächtiger und ein Ohnmächtiger. Du bist ein Mutiger, aber ein Ängstlicher. (T.II.417)

It is through the device of the epilogue that the novel is finally moved outside itself. The narrator immediately

distances the epilogue from what has preceded it by referring to the time which has elapsed since Tarabas' death:

In der Zeit, in der diese Zeilen geschrieben werden, sind ungefähr fünfzehn Jahre seit dem Tode des merkwürdigen Mannes verflossen. (T.II.470)

The function of the final chapter is ironic. The effect of the epilogue is in fact to draw the readers' attention to the internal displacement within the novel, its characteristic diversity, by preceding on the assumption of an essential unity. By referring to the passage of time since the events which he has described, the narrator at once moves the novel outside what we initially perceived to be its limits, and yet maintains the essential relation between the two parts through the medium of the continuous flow of chronological time. Through the device of the epilogue, the narrator draws our attention to the transitoriness and the closed factitiousness of the narrative: the dialectic which informs the relationship between the development of the hero and the expressive medium of the novel is re-affirmed in the epilogue. The narrator's description of Koroapta after Tarabas' death is in the present tense, which, as we saw earlier, transcends the closed realm expressed by the narrative tense and implies a new perspective on what has already been described:

Der Fremde, der heute nach Koroapta kommt, kann keine Spur mehr von den traurigen, wunderbaren und merkwürdigen Ereignissen finden. Alle Häuser des Städtchens sind neu hergerichtet,... (T.II.470)

Within the limits of the novel, the "reality" with which we are presented is shown to be as transitory and

insubstantial as the private realm which Tarabas constructed as a refuge in the face of a hostile and fragmentary environment. One of the essential features of the epilogue is that it draws attention to the tendency of literary language to delude. Through the epilogue we are made aware that the language of the novel itself constitutes a second reality, which is paralleled in the context of the fiction by Tarabas' private realm. The language of the text is exposed as being ultimately autonomous: the language of Tarabas is manifestly not concerned with establishing distinctions between true and false as they might exist independently of the novel. At no point does the narrator investigate the "truth" of the "miracle": the function of the miracle in the development of the plot itself suggests the category of truth to which it is to be referred. We have already seen that the only "reality" which has any value within the fiction is a purely subjective construct, Tarabas' private realm. It is through the device of the epilogue that the language of the text is re-established in relation to criteria of meaning which lie beyond it. The meaning of the novel Tarabas is constituted as a relation between what lies outside its limits and the clearly defined "second reality" it creates for the reader.

Chapter X.

Die Hundert Tage

In our examination of Tarabas we saw how Roth attempted to avoid the artistic difficulties caused by his own emotional involvement in recent history by re-awakening a vanished world. In Die Hundert Tage Roth once again turns to a historical subject. In a letter to Carl Seelig he described his new project, and some of the attendant difficulties:

Ich schreibe übrigens zum ersten Mal einen historischen Roman -...weil ich im Stoff ein Mittel gefunden habe, mich direkt auszudrücken. Und ich bin im größten embarras! weiß die gemeinen Mittel des historischen Romanschreibers zu verachten und "privat" zu werden, ich meine privat im Sinne des Romanciers! Es ist schwer, aber es reizt mich, eben deshalb, wie es vielleicht reizvoll war, "Salambo" zu schreiben. Nur "balladesk" - nicht "homerisch". (1)

Roth's brief description of his project implies an extremely restricted conception of history. History, as we shall see, is viewed throughout Die Hundert Tage as a dead complex of facts. For Roth history has no living movement: life and spirit are bestowed on it by the writer. Once again the main focus of Roth's interest is the psychology of the central figure, in this case Napoleon: - "'privat' zu werden" for Roth implies the presentation of an historical figure in a form which gives his character a primarily inward expression. The historical context from which the figure emerges fades into insignificance. In Die Hundert

(1) Brief an Carl Seelig. Nice, 11.11.1934, in: Joseph Roth, Briefe. 1911-1939, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970, p.394

Tage there is no attempt to understand the historical cast of a particular age. History functions purely as a decorative backdrop to an examination of the psychological condition of an individual. (1) It becomes clear from a letter Roth wrote to his French translator Blanche Gidon that he viewed the character of Napoleon as quite independent from his relation to the historical complexion of his age:

- (1) It is illuminating to compare Flaubert's motives for turning to an historical subject.

Mich ekeln die häßlichen Dinge und die banalen Milieus an. Die Bovary hat mir für lange Zeit die bürgerlichen Sitten verekelt. Ich werde vielleicht einige Jahre mit einem glanzvollen Sujet leben, weit weg von der modernen Welt, die mir aus den Ellenbogen herauswächst...

Wenn man 'Salammbô' lesen wird, wird man, hoffe ich, nicht an den Verfasser denken! Wenige Leute werden erraten, wie traurig man sein mußte, um die Neuerweckung Karthagos zu unternehmen! Das ist eine Flucht in die Wüste von Thebais, wohin mich der Ekel vor dem modernen Leben gejagt hat.

Gustave Flaubert, in: Georg Lukács. Probleme des Realismus III, chp.3, Luchterhand, Neuwied u. Berlin, 1965, p. 224.

These two letters, written while Flaubert was at work on Salammbô, show how Flaubert also sought refuge from a deep involvement in contemporary issues by re-creating a vanished world. Flaubert's view of his literary project concurs to a large extent with Roth's view of Die Hundert Tage. Like Roth, Flaubert views history as a dead complex of facts upon which he must bestow life and spirit. His attempts to present the contemporary reader with a realistic image of a past society were fraught with difficulties. In another letter written during the same period, Flaubert demonstrates his awareness that the immense wealth of graphic detail in Salammbô failed to give a total picture of the society of Carthage.

Ich bin jetzt voller Zweifel über das Ganze, über den allgemeinen Plan; ich glaube, es gibt hier viel zuviel Söldner. Das ist geschichtlich, ich weiß. Aber wenn ein Roman so langweilig ist wie ein wissenschaftlicher Schmöker, dann Gute Nacht, dann hat die Kunst aufgehört... Ich fange jetzt die Belagerung von Karthago an. Ich bin ganz verloren unter den Kriegsmaschinen, den Ballisten und Skorpionen und verstehe von ihnen gar nichts, weder ich noch irgend jemand sonst!

In Lukács, op.cit. p.226

Le roman: C'est triste, je ne voudrais pas livrer le secret, mais je vous le dis à vous: les 100 jours. Il m'intéresse, ce pauvre Napoleon - il s'agit pour moi de le transformer: un Dieu redevenant un homme - la seule phase de sa vie, ou il est "homme" et malheureux. C'est la seule fois dans l'histoire où on voit qu'un "incroyant" devient VISIBLEMENT petit, tout petit. Et c'est ça qui m'attire. Je voudrais faire un "humble" d'un "grand". C'est visiblement la PUNITION DE DIEU, la première fois dans l'histoire moderne. Napoleon abaissé: voilà le symbole d'une âme humaine absolument terrestre qui s'abaisse et qui s'élève à même temps. (1)

Roth's conception of history is thus purely subjective: history is defined as case history, and as a case history which is radically adjusted to reveal elements of the modern psyche. History defined as an objective progression of events is no longer knowable. Roth's only access to it is to project his own way of seeing things onto past events. (2) It is apparent from Roth's letter to Blanche

(1) Brief an Blanche Gidon, Nice, 17.11.1934, in: Joseph Roth. Briefe. 1911-1939, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970, pp.394-5

(2) Roth's view is clearly expressed in his essay "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit'!", Die Literarische Welt, 17. and 24.1.1930, vol.IV., p.248

Der Berichterstatter erst ist nicht zufällig anwesend, ist nicht unpersönlich. Auch er ist subjektiv. Aber er trägt die Verantwortung für seine Subjektivität. Sie ist eine aktive, keine zufällige, sondern eine persönliche. Erst das Bild, das er vom Ereignis entwirft, vermittelt seine Vorstellung von dem Ereignis - und nicht von ihm. Der Augenzeuge steht sichtbar neben und vor seiner Mitteilung. Der Berichterstatter verschwindet hinter seinem Bericht.

Roth's approach is not new. Lukács establishes connexions between the way history is portrayed in literature with the changes in the form of popular consciousness of history after 1848. Lukács chooses Burckhardt as an illustration of the new subjectivism in historical consciousness.

Burckhardt geht bewußt und entschieden von einer subjektiven Auffassung der Geschichte aus. "Eine große subjektive Willkür in der Auswahl der Gegenstände wird gar nicht zu umgehen sein. Wir sind 'unwissenschaftlich'." Es gibt nach Burckhardt nackte, überlieferte Tatsachen, an die man nur durch die belebende

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Gidon that Napoleon interests him not as a product of a particular social-historical ensemble, but as an atypical case. The psychological disposition which Roth attributes to Napoleon is an absolute, transcending the measured flow of history. From the outset historical figures in Die Hundert Tage are presented as being isolated from those around them. The description of the tide of popular feeling with which the novel opens merely emphasizes the intense isolation and loneliness of the recently deposed king:

Einsam war er und den Menschen fremd - denn die wahren Könige sind fremd und einsam. (H.T.II.476)

The narrator's interest soon shifts to the figure of Napoleon, who is also presented as being fundamentally isolated. Once again the focus is on individual psychology. (1) The

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Kraft der eigenen Subjektivität heranreichen kann. In dieser Belebung der Geschichte spielen nach seiner Theorie die historischen Anekdoten eine sehr wichtige Rolle. Sie sind "eine vorgestellte Geschichte, die uns sagt, was man den Menschen zutraute und was für sie charakteristisch ist."

In: Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.216

For Benedetto Croce too, history was something subjective, an experience which also defined the categories of truth to which it was to be referred:

...Geschichte sind sie, oder werden sie sein, für diejenigen, die sie gedacht haben oder sie denken werden, und für mich sind sie es gewesen, als ich sie gedacht und meinem geistigen Bedürfnis gemäß verarbeitet habe, und sie werden es wieder sein, wenn ich sie wieder denken werde."

In: Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.219

- (1) Lukács pinpointed the consequences in the realm of art of the gradual erosion of all attempts to uncover the real driving forces of history:

Die Unerkennbarkeit der Wege und Ziele des Geschichtsablaufs hat ihr genaues Gegenbild in der Unerkennbarkeit der in der Geschichte handelnden Menschen. Sie sind nicht infolge bestimmter objektiver oder subjektiver Umstände zeitweilig isoliert, vereinsamt, sondern prinzipiell einsam.

In: Georg Lukács, op.cit. p.271

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narrator's assessment of the social implications of Napoleon's rise to power is merely a brief preface to what becomes one of the central issues in the novel - the dichotomy between the inner, subjective self and the public life of Napoleon:

Indem er sich selbst erhob, adelte, krönte, erhob er alle Namenlosen im gemeinen Volk, und also liebte es ihn. Erschreckt, besiegt und im Zaum gehalten hatte er eine geraume Zeit die Großen dieser Erde, und deshalb hielten ihn die Kleinen für ihren Rächer und anerkannten ihn als ihren Herrn... Man konnte ihn nur hassen, lieben, fürchten, anbeten, als wäre er ein Gott. Und er war ein Mensch. (H.T.II.476)

The figure of Napoleon in Die Hundert Tage does not grow organically out of the broader development of the whole society. The character of the upper echelons of contemporary society is derived in a totally undialectical manner from the isolated figurehead of Napoleon:

Die Generäle und Minister zogen ihre alten Uniformen an, legten ihre kaiserlichen Auszeichnungen um, und nun, da sie sich im Spiegel besahen, bevor sie ihr Haus verließen, war es ihnen, als hätten sie seit der Abwesenheit des Kaisers gar nicht gelebt, sondern einen tauben Schlaf getan und wären erst heute zum Leben erwacht. (H.T.II.480)

History as a total process pales into insignificance. Napoleon's generals are only of importance in as far as they are reflections of his power and influence. The focus on Napoleon as a private figure, viewed outside the broader social-historical context necessitates the distanced and authoritative narrative perspective which we find throughout Die Hundert Tage. The narrator presents Napoleon as

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For further examples of Napoleon's essential isolation in Die Hundert Tage, see H.T.II.504:

Hier, auf dieser übermäßig erhöhten Tribüne herrschte die Einsamkeit der körperlichen Verlassenen.

H.T.II.506-7:

Er aber, der Kaiser, war allein. Einsamer, immer einsamer, saß er vor den Karten,...

being continually strained between two opposing sets of determinations - his inward, private life and the sphere of his public duty. The narrator documents Napoleon's reactions on seeing his advisors on his triumphant return to Paris:

War er ein Gott, zu strafen und zu zürnen? Er war nur ein Mensch. Sie aber hielten ihn für einen Gott. (H.T.II.484)

The narrator's description of Napoleon's return to Paris once again shows the extent to which the narrow focus on Napoleon's private dilemmas precludes a portrayal of contemporary society at large. The welcoming crowds of Parisian citizens are only described as they appear to Napoleon. The crowds are resolved into a symbol of adulation:

In diesem Augenblick, gebannt von den beschwörenden Händen, verlor er Willen und Bewußtsein. Diese liebenden, weißen Hände, die sich ihm entgegenstreckten, schienen ihm furchtbarer als feindliche und bewaffnete... Was alles wollten sie von ihm? Diese Hände beteten, forderten und befahlen zugleich: Hände, die man Göttern entgegenstreckt. (H.T.II.482)

We have seen how the narrator rejects the historically specific in favour of an a-historical portrayal of Napoleon's inner life. This abstractness in the portrayal of chronological time is paralleled by an emphasis on the flow of time as a subjective experience, which is an important element in the characterization of Napoleon as a private figure. (1) The restricted narrative perspective

(1) It is a measure of Napoleon's insecurity that he considers what he perceives as the extraordinarily rapid flow of chronological time as a threat.

H.T.II.489: Die Zeit ging unaufhaltsam, hurtiger schien sie dem Kaiser als je zuvor in seinem Leben... Heute gehorchten ihm noch vielleicht die Menschen, die Zeit aber rannte ihm davon, zerfloß und verschwamm, sobald er sie greifen wollte.

does not allow the exploration of the dichotomy between the public and private figures of Napoleon through an examination of his relationship to the whole of popular life. The narrator describes how the emperor confronts his own self-image, which is as static and absolute as a mirror image or a portrait:

Er stellte sich vor den Spiegel... Er kämmte mit den Fingern sein schwarzes Haar in die Stirn, lächelte seinem Spiegelbild zu, der große Kaiser dem großen Kaiser. Er war mit sich zufrieden. (H.T.II.485)

Napoleon has internalized a frozen public image of himself as emperor. Once again it is apparent that his character and public image are not moulded by his interaction with the broad mass of the people. It is an absolute value from which he has distanced himself and against which he must measure himself to confront his untrustworthy advisor Fouché:

Den ungläubigsten aller Menschen,...empfang der

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H.T.II.491: Auf dem Tisch stand die Sanduhr... So hatte der Kaiser seine Feindin, die Zeit, ständig vor Augen... Stärker als das Heulen der Menge war die geduldige, gleichmäßige, und eintönige Stimme der Uhr. Und er liebte sie mehr als die Stimme des Volkes. Das Volk war ein unzuverlässiger Freund, die Zeit war eine getreue, zuverlässige Feindin.

H.T.II.507: Klein erschien die Erde...schnell zu durchschreiten, so schnell, wie die Zeit es erforderte, die unerbittlich tickende Standuhr, der unaufhörlich rinne-
nende Sand...

The breakdown of the measured flow of chronological time is also a symbol of the disintegration of what had been considered an integral world order (compare Zipper und sein Vater, I.448). Angelina's sense of time is disturbed as she sees her world collapse around her.

H.T.II.555: In dem Maße, in dem ihr kleiner Sohn wuchs,... merkte sie allein den unaufhaltsamen Lauf der Monate und der Jahre. Es war, als ob sie vorher in der Meinung gelebt hätte, die Zeit ginge nicht vorwärts, sondern rollte gewissermaßen im Kreise.

Kaiser in der Haltung, in der ihn Millionen Gläubige zu sehen gewohnt waren. Da er jetzt die Arme verschränkte, fühlte er nicht nur sich selbst, sondern er ließ auch den Gehäßten den Glauben der Millionen Gläubigen fühlen,... Als sein eigenes Denkmal erwartete der Kaiser den Minister. (H.T.II.486)

The progress of history is arrested: history becomes a pictorial frame within which an individual psychological drama is unfolded. The conception of history is paralleled in the portrayal of Napoleon's personal history. The emperor's relation to his ancestors is inverted in a parody of fruitful generation:

Außergewöhnlich, wie er war, Erzeugnis einer Willkür der Natur und ihre Ausgeburt, hatte er gleichsam auch ihre Gesetze verkehrt, und er war nicht mehr das Kind seines Geschlechts, sondern geradezu wie der Vater seiner Vorfahren. (H.T.II.490)

The links in the chain of generations, a metaphor for historical progression, break down. Napoleon's isolation, and the a-historical focus on his personality are further highlighted by the narrator's description of the tenuous links between Napoleon and his son. The emperor is set at two removes from his young son, as the narrator describes how indistinct and remote the picture of Napoleon's successor appears:

Das dunkle Kleidchen des kaiserlichen Sohnes verschwamm unsichtbar in ihnen. Bleich leuchtete nur noch sein liebliches und sehr fernes Antlitz. (H.T.II.491)

Similarly Napoleon's remoteness from the people is conveyed through the image of a portrait. Through his description of the crowd's reaction to the presence of the emperor, the narrator highlights the discrepancy between the public image and a glimpse of the private image which shows through the mask:

Dieses Bild,...kannten sie von vieltausend Konterfeien her,... Es war ein vertrautes, ein heimisches, ja ein heimliches Bild des großen Kaisers... Deshalb auch erschrakten sie manchmal, wenn sie es so lebendig erblickten: (H.T.II.692)

The authoritative narrator frequently indicates the lack of correspondence between the public and private selves of Napoleon:

Er liebte das Volk nicht, er mißtraute seinem Jubel, seiner Begeisterung und seinem Geruch. Und er lächelte dennoch, auf seinem Schimmel, unbeweglich, der Liebling dieses Volkes, ein Kaiser und ein Stein. (1) (H.T.II.493)

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- (1) See also H.T.II.601: Zwar standen alle Millionen Sterne am silberblauen Himmel: dem Kaiser aber war es, wenn er zu ihm emporsah, als seien es nicht die wirklichen Sterne, sondern nur die blassen, fernen Bilder von wirklichen Sternen.

Once again it is illuminating to compare Lukács' comments on Flaubert's Salammbô:

Indem Flaubert einen historischen Stoff wählt, dessen inneres gesellschaftlich-geschichtliches Wesen ihn nichts angeht,...ist er gezwungen, durch die Modernisierung der Psychologie ⁺ an irgendeinem Punkt eine Verbindung mit sich und mit dem Leser zu schaffen... sie (die Modernisierung) ist die einzige Quelle der Bewegtheit... Freilich ist es ein gespenstisches Scheinleben. Und zwar ein Scheinleben, das die übertrieben objektive Realität der Gegenstände aufhebt... Wenn Walter Scott eine mittelalterliche Stadt...beschreibt, so sind diese Gegenstände Bestandteile des Lebens...von Menschen, deren ganze Psychologie auf derselben Stufe der historischen Entwicklung steht wie diese Gegenstände,... So entsteht bei den älteren Epikern die "Totalität der Objekte". Bei Flaubert gibt es keinen solchen Zusammenhang zwischen der Außenwelt und der Psychologie der Hauptgestalten. Und durch diese Zusammenhanglosigkeit wird die archäologische Genauigkeit der Schilderung der äußeren Welt degradiert:...sie ist nur ein malerischer Rahmen, innerhalb dessen sich ein rein moderner Vorgang abspielt. ⁽⁺⁾ Lukács' emphasis)

In: Probleme des Realismus III, op.cit. pp.228-9

Roth's choice of an historical subject whose inner social-historical nature was of no concern to him dictates to a large extent the distanced narrative perspective: The narrator views things through "einen malerischen Rahmen". H.T.II.478: Nun sah man Tausende aus dem Volk, aus den Vorstädten von Paris gegen den Mittelpunkt der Stadt, gegen das Schloß heranziehen,...

As we have seen, Roth's emphasis in his portrayal of Napoleon has been on the private, on his psychological condition; there is no attempt to demonstrate the historical necessity of this particular individual personality. The reasons for Napoleon's psychological condition remain unclear, and this fundamental unclarity is exactly countered by the incomprehensibility of the ways and ends of the historical process as it is presented in the novel. The young recruits to Napoleon's army do not understand why they are preparing for war. The emperor remains a distanced and detached figure:

Ihnen aber war der Kaiser fremd und das Leben nahe.
Wozu wollte er den Krieg? Wozu, wohin und warum
mußten sie marschieren? (H.T.II.506)

The mysterious nature of the historical process is once again made apparent, ^{this} time through the elliptic prophecy of Veronika Casimir:

Er hörte nicht, wie Veronika murmelte: "Pique zur Rechten, das geht zum Schlechten; Treff-Schwarz zur Linken bedeutet Sinken; Caro-Schwarz ist nah, die Gefahr ist da;..." Er hatte einen fernen Blick, er schien durch ihre massive Gestalt hindurchzudringen, in die Welt vielleicht,... (H.T.II.517)

Lost in private reveries, Napoleon is unaware of the dangers which face him. His lack of awareness of the march of events thus parallels the narrator's focus on a study of his mind and behaviour.

The scope of the novel is apparently broadened by the inclusion of the personal history of Angelina Pietri, a servant at the emperor's court. Yet instead of demonstrating the nature of Napoleon's relation to the development of popular life, Angelina's tragic history merely highlights

the complete absence of interplay between Napoleon and the common people. This distance is emphasized by the form of the novel itself. Angelina's life is described in a separate book: the novel forms two distinct halves. Her remoteness from Napoleon and his circle is thrown into relief by the fact that her existence in the emperor's court is presented as a mere contingency:

Um jene Zeit lebte Angelina Pietri unter dem niederen und namenlosen Gesinde des kaiserlichen Hofes.
(H.T.II.520)

What at first appears an almost accidental, episode intrusion into the plot becomes appropriate and effective as Angelina's actions emerge in a clear relation to the circumstances in which she finds herself. The narrator illustrates the nature of the social relations at Napoleon's court through the figure of Angelina. The distance which separates the common people from Napoleon makes it impossible for her to deliver a personal message to the emperor from a humble Corsican well-wisher:

Angelina kam freilich nicht dazu, den Auftrag auszuführen. Der Kaiser war unerreichbar. Und vom Kaiser träumte sie. (H.T.II.520)

Yet the narrator does not dwell on the complexity of social relations: the focus of attention is Angelina's personal sense of remoteness from Napoleon. Once again the emperor's remoteness from the mass of the people is expressed through the image of the portrait which at once conceals and reveals his identity:

Sein Konterfei hing in allen Stuben, das gleiche Konterfei, das sie in Korsika in allen Stuben gesehen hatte... Er ist herrlich anzuschauen: weit und nah zugleich ist er, herzensgut ist er und gleichzeitig furchtbar. (H.T.II.520-1)

Just as the emperor's remoteness from his son is expressed through the indistinctness of the latter's portrait, Angelina's distance from Napoleon is similarly demonstrated by the narrator through his description of the painting of the emperor which Angelina gazes at with such longing:

Sie blieb vor dem ersten Bild stehn: es war der Kaiser,... Man mußte den Kopf heben, um sein Angesicht zu sehen. Man sah seine Stiefel zuerst, die Hosen dann, später erst den Rock und schließlich, wie in Wolken, hoch oben sein Antlitz. (H.T.II.530)

Angelina's life is presented as being determined by the circumstances in which she finds herself. The narrator describes how she feels incapable of exerting a decisive influence on the course of events which determines her life:

...es schien ihr, daß sie verurteilt sei, von nun ab nie mehr wählen zu können zwischen Tugend und Sünde, sondern immer schwanken zu müssen zwischen zwei Arten von Sünden. (H.T.II.536)

In demonstrating the extent to which the scope for an individual's action is limited by force of circumstance - albeit in an historically abstract setting - the narrator emphasizes the enormous gulf which separates the different social groups: the figure of Napoleon is more remote from Angelina than ever. The absence of a clearly defined historical frame implies that historical figures are separated from the real driving forces of the age, and are thus rendered fundamentally mysterious. In Angelina's mind the emperor becomes more distant than ever, more distant than his own portrait, an abstraction of an abstraction:

Jetzt war er wirklich der große Kaiser von den Bildern, er selbst wie ein Abbild seiner eigenen Porträts, ja, noch ferner als diese. Fern war er den kleinen Menschen seines Landes. (H.T.II.553)

The abstract nature of the historical process as it is depicted in Die Hundert Tage is apparent in the description of the social unrest which sweeps through the country:

Und vielleicht war auch die Verwirrung, in der sie sich befand, die Folge jener allgemeinen Schrecken, die damals wie böse, tiefhängende Gewitterwolken über das Land dahinzogen. (H.T.II.559)

As the march of events which overtakes the country is perceived to be essentially alien and mysterious, so Angelina's own experiences appear to her to be unintelligible:

Sie wußte auf einmal genau, daß sich alles Sinnlose und Törichte, das ihr geschehen war, gleichsam im gnadenreichen Schatten des großen Kaisers ereignet hatte. (H.T.II.567)

Once again Napoleon is perceived as a ghostly abstraction. The nature of the historical understanding which underpins the novel is further highlighted through the figure of Wokurka, the Polish shoemaker who forms a deep attachment to Angelina. Wokurka views the events which are sweeping over the country with a profound sense of detachment. Like the shadowy figure of Eduard P. in Zipper und sein Vater he "...wandelt an den Rändern der Ereignisse." (Z.I.520), and is able to look at events from a distanced perspective:

Der Schuster Wokurka aber befand sich auf einer glücklichen Insel, unabhängig von den wechselnden Geschicken der Welt. Was ging ihn der Kaiser an, was ging ihn der heimgekehrte König an? Was ging ihn das Volk an, das draußen Tumult machte? (H.T.II.566)

Although the subjective orientation of Wokurka's concerns is made apparent by the narrator, it is through the shoemaker that the objective character of Angelina's obsession with her image of the emperor is brought to light. Wokurka quickly exposes the falsity of Angelina's image by pointing out to her son that it is unrealistic to believe that

Napoleon will return to power:

"Er wird nicht wiederkommen", sagte der Schuster Wokurka. (H.T.II.575)

The gulf between Angelina's vision of Napoleon and the psychological portrait of him that the narrator presents is also highlighted and paralleled in the form of the fiction by the interruption of the narrative flow and the division of the work into chapters. The third book deals almost exclusively with Napoleon's private responses to historical events, which are sketched out in broad outline by the narrator. It is a measure of the abstractness of the portrayal of history that the element of historical necessity is totally absent. The battle of Waterloo is presented from the perspective of its psychological impact on Napoleon. The historical battle provides a starting point for the personal transformation of Napoleon, and what Roth considered the theme of the novel, "...un Dieu redevenant un homme-..." (see above page 244, note 1). The immediate aftermath of the battle is seen primarily in terms of the changes it effects in Napoleon's state of mind:

Jetzt zum erstenmal und just in der Stunde seiner Schmach und seiner Niederlage fühlte er, daß er sehr viel Macht besaß, aber daß er sie gar nicht wünschte... Er, der immer gedacht hatte, man müsse schlagen und auch treffen, erlebte die erste Ahnung von dem Glück, das die Schwäche bereitet, das die Ergebenheit beschert. (H.T.II.599-600)

His ignominious^o defeat at Waterloo gives Napoleon the opportunity to renounce his public responsibilities and retreat into his own private realm:

Sie wollen mich mächtig sehn,... Ich aber, ich liebe jetzt die Ohnmacht. Die Ohnmacht liebe ich! Ich war so lange unselig groß: ich will einmal klein und selig sein!... (H.T.II.600)

Ich bin mehr als ein Kaiser, ich bin ein Kaiser,
der verzichtet. Ich halte ein Schwert in der Hand,
und ich lasse es fallen. (H.T.II.601)

The paradox of the interaction between the public and private selves of Napoleon is that he feels worthy of his position just as he is on the point of renouncing it for ever:

Nun aber, da er sein Zepter zerbrach, wurde er der wirkliche Kaiser von Frankreich... Er hatte abgedankt. Und ihm war, als hätte man ihn jetzt zum erstenmal gekrönt. (H.T.II.608)

Napoleon's abnegation of his public identity and his retreat into the realm of his private existence is implicitly related to the absence of an understanding of the laws of historical progression:

Alles gehorcht unbegreiflichen, aber ganz bestimmten Gesetzen: die Sterne, die Winde, die Zugvögel, die Kaiser, die Soldaten, alle Menschen,... Das Gesetz, nach dem ich gehandelt habe, ist erfüllt. (H.T.II.609)

The diminution of the historical perspective both implies and is re-enforced by an emphasis on individual psychology: the emergence of Napoleon's private identity imbues the historical events described with an illusory quality:

Der wirkliche Kaiser Napoleon war verborgen,...der wirkliche Kaiser kam niemals zum Vorschein. Alles auf Erden war Spiel und sinnloser Schauplatz, und er selbst, der Kaiser Napoleon, spielte jetzt die Rolle des Kaisers Napoleon, der sich in die Hände der Feinde begibt. (H.T.II.627)

This ghostly illusion is encapsulated and expressed through the image of the masters of illusion - "Schauspieler":

Bis zu diesem Augenblick hatte er noch gehofft, er spiele, wie in der Nacht, vor dem Spiegel; er sei nicht der Kaiser Napoleon selbst, sondern ein Komödiant, der ihn darstelle. (1) (H.T.II.628)

(1) See also H.T.II.504: Er fühlte sich auf dieser Tribüne wie auf einem seltsamen lächerlichen Gerät und so, als stünde er auf einem Thron und zugleich auf Stelzen. Sein Kleid war eine Verkleidung, die Versammlung ein Publikum, die Würdenträger und er selbst waren Schauspieler.

The breakdown of all attempts to understand the driving forces of history, which can be attributed to the narrow focus on Napoleon's individual psyche, is paralleled in the relationship between Wokurka and Angelina. Wokurka's experiences in Napoleon's army made him abandon all attempts to follow the historical process: his only method of survival is to retreat into his own private realm:

"...Mir soll noch einer sagen, ich soll mich um die große Geschichte kümmern! Die kleinen, die kleinen Geschichten sind es, die ich liebe. Du allein kümmerst mich, Angelina!..." (H.T.II.635)

His experience has taught him that the course of history is not affected by the thoughts, desires or actions of the mass of the people:

"...Man müßte schon ein so großer Mann sein, wie er selbst einer gewesen ist, um etwas zu ändern. Wenn man klein ist, ist es gleich, ob Mann oder Frau!" (H.T.II.636)

We have already seen how the denial of historical progression resulted in the separation of great historical figures from the driving forces of their age. The only way in which the small group of those loyal to Napoleon can make sense of the recent developments is to project its own image of things onto the events which have overtaken them. The narrator describes how the small group deludes itself, how it creates a new reality which is totally divorced from the perceptible and far-reaching changes in the world around it: the group is incapable of realizing what a vulnerable force it is in the face of the overwhelming loyalty to the King:

Eine winzige, eine lächerlich winzige Schar! Aber, da sie so gewaltig johlten, Rufe ihnen von vielen Fenstern zuflogen, schien es ihnen, sie seien Hunderte, Tausende, das Volk von Frankreich. (H.T.II.639)

The illusory nature of this "second reality" is highlighted by Angelina's individual fate. The final pages of the novel demonstrate how Angelina's image of the emperor as an all powerful figure does not accord with the reality of the situation. Angelina protests her loyalty to Napoleon in the midst of a throng of royalist supporters and is almost casually murdered by them. The narrator demonstrates the strength of her loyalty to her own image of the emperor by describing how she is unable to distinguish between a grotesque puppet effigy of Napoleon and her own vision of him:

Sie sah nicht den also verspotteten, sondern sie sah den wirklichen Kaiser neben sich, hart neben ihrem zerschmetterten Körper. (1) (H.T.II.660)

The death of Angelina finally shatters Wokurka's hopes of achieving personal happiness:

Eifrig gurgelte die Seine an ihm vorbei, er sah hartnäckig, gedankenlos, betäubt in das hurtig dahinfließende Wasser. Es trug den Himmel, der sich darin spiegelte, mit sich fort und alle seine silbernen Sterne. (H.T.II.641)

The final tableau of the book has another dimension. The image of the river flowing on, carrying the stars with it, is the means through which the line of the text doubles back upon itself, and comments upon the implications of the historical understanding which underpins the novel. An attempt to understand history which replaces efforts to uncover the real driving forces of the age with a narrow psychological view of significant historical

(1) Compare Joseph Roth. Der blinde Spiegel (1925).
Niemand wußte, daß sie in den Himmel hatte gehen wollen und ins Wasser gefallen war. Sie zerschellte an den weichen Treppen aus purpurnen und goldenen Wolken.

In: vol.III, p.118

figures produces a mere allusion to reality - "...die...
fernen Bildern von wirklichen Sternen." (H.T.II.601)

The thematic development of Die Hundert Tage thus evolves as an analogy to the points made in the introduction about the formal operations of the text. We saw how Roth asserts the novel's own truth and draws our attention to the fact that it is a second order of truth, at one remove from what is extrinsic to it. We saw how Roth's novels are in fact comprised of several different elements, often in direct opposition to each other. The provisional nature of the approximation of fiction to reality is highlighted from within the novels themselves. This opposition is represented by the thematic development in Die Hundert Tage. It is through the figure of Wokurka that the reader becomes fully aware of the falsity of Angelina's image of Napoleon. Wokurka's solution echoes the one voiced by the persona of Roth in the early feuilleton Spaziergang:

Was kümmert mich, den Spaziergänger,...die große
Tragödie der Weltgeschichte,... Das Diminutiv der
Teile ist eindrucksvoller als die Monumentalität
des Ganzen. Ich habe keinen Sinn mehr für die Weite,
allumfassende Armbewegung des Weltbühnenhelden. Ich
bin ein Spaziergänger. (1)

(1) "Spaziergang". Berlin Börsen-Courier, 24.5.1921,
vol.IV, p.794

Chapter XI.

Beichte eines Mörders

In the opening pages of Beichte eines Mörders, the tendency of the novel to set up its own world, which we have noted in previous chapters, seems firmly embodied in the structure of the narrative. Roth presents us with a "Rahmenerzählung", a story within a story: the narrator emerges as the authoritative organizer of the material presented. The abstractness of the temporal setting is a measure of the extent to which the authoritative narrator defines and circumscribes the shadowy world of the Russian émigrés he describes. The relationships between the narrator and the lives of the characters, the pre-condition for the "Rahmenerzählung", is effectively counteracted in Beichte eines Mörders by the temporal distance the narrator inserts between himself and the presence of the events which unfold before the reader in the narrator's rendition of Golubtschik's account:

Vor einigen Jahren wohnte ich in der Rue des Quatre Vents. Meinen Fenstern gegenüber lag das russische Restaurant "Tari-Bari". (B.M.II.645)

The impression of the narrator's distanced perspective is re-enforced through the image of his detached view from his hotel room opposite the restaurant:

...konnte ich doch manchmal am Morgen, wenn ich zufällig an mein Fenster trat, sehen, daß "Tari-Bari" schon geöffnet war... (1) (B.M.II.646)

(1) In the section on Hotel Savoy we also saw how Roth conveyed the onlooker's sense of detachment by describing his distanced view from a window. See H.S.I.797.

The narrator's apparent autonomy is paralleled in the context of the fiction by the relative autonomy of the world occupied by the Russian emigrés. Like the patrons of the café Arnold frequents in Zipper und sein Vater, the Russian emigrés move in a world in which the normal laws of temporal progression have been suspended:

Im russischen Restaurant aber spielte die Zeit keine Rolle. Eine blecherne Uhr hing an der Wand. Manchmal stand sie, manchmal ging sie falsch; sie schien die Zeit nicht anzuzeigen, sondern verhöhnen zu wollen... Die Gesetze der Zeit schienen aufgehoben zu sein.
(B.M.II.645)

The form of the narrative emerges in a clear relation to the content of the narrator's description. Just as the patrons of the "Tari-Bari" ignore the laws of chronological time and erect their own peculiar temporal order as a demonstration against

die...berechnende und so sehr berechnete Gesinnung des europäischen Westens,... (B.M.II.645),

so the narrator too parades his role as authoritative organizer of narrative detail. Pre-empting the relation between cause and effect which will develop as Golubtschik's story unfolds, the narrator is seen to establish the immediate course of developments within the narrative:

Es ist an der Zeit, daß ich ihn etwas näher beschreibe:
(B.M.II.647)

Yet the narrator's position as an authoritative figure who appears distanced from the events he sets down, is undermined early on in the novel. The narrator is drawn into Golubtschik's world by the latter's knowledge of his circumstances: the narrator also emerges as an enigmatic figure because of his desire to conceal his identity. By

drawing attention to the literary activity of the narrator through Golubtschik's remarks, Roth effectively alerts the reader to the fact that what he is reading is a piece of fiction:

"Es war dann später", fuhr Golubtschik fort, "noch einmal in Rußland, will sagen: nicht mehr in Rußland, sondern in den Vereinigten Sowjetstaaten, im Auftrag einer großen Zeitung. Er ist Schriftsteller!"
(B.M.II.649-50)

At intervals throughout the novel points of contact between events in Golubtschik's own account are related to the circumstances in which his story is being told. After his first encounter with Lakatos, Golubtschik accompanies the stranger to a restaurant which is also called the "Tari-Bari", and is owned by the same man as the restaurant where Golubtschik relates his story. By commenting on his own reaction to Golubtschik's story and on the reactions of the other bar patrons, the narrator once again alludes to the power of the novel to set up its own world. It is an apparent paradox that the status of the narrative as an artefact is alluded to by the suspension of all laws of temporal progression just at the point when the narrative is related to its starting point:

...und wie um zu beweisen, daß die Geschichte, die uns Golubtschik zu erzählen im Begriffe war, eine ewig gültige, trostlose Geschichte sei, unabhängig von Zeit und Raum, von Tag und Nacht. Da also die Zeit stillestand, war gleichsam auch der Raum,... aller seiner Raumgesetze ledig; und es war, als befänden wir uns nicht auf der festen Erde, sondern auf den ewig schwankenden Wassern des ewigen Meeres. Wie in einem Schiff kamen wir uns vor. Und unser Meer war die Nacht. (B.M.II.713)

The abstractness of the portrayal of chronological time is justified to a certain extent within the context of

the fiction. As a preface to his long personal history, Golubtschik expresses his complete lack of interest in the broader spectrum of human activity:

"Ich bin in keiner Beziehung eine politische Persönlichkeit. Ich mache mir überhaupt nichts aus öffentlichen Dingen. Ich liebe das Private. Nur das interessiert mich... Das private Leben, die einfache Menschlichkeit ist wichtiger, größer, tragischer als alles Öffentliche. (B.M.II.650)

In Golubtschik's opinion, important historical events can only be approached from a consciously subjective viewpoint. Golubtschik re-iterates his essentially idealist conception of history. He proceeds from the assumption that the fundamental structure of the past is not the end product of a series of developmental phases, but is essentially the same as that of the present: history is defined as the product of the particular disposition of an individual psyche:

"...Ich will damit sagen, daß man, wenn man genau achtgeben würde, unbedingt zu dem Resultat kommen müßte, daß alle sogenannten großen, historischen Ereignisse in Wahrheit zurückzuführen sind auf irgendein Moment im Privatleben ihrer Urheber oder auf mehrere Momente.." (B.M.II.652)

Golubtschik's subjectivist orientation is a radical denial of the dialectic of contradictory development: history becomes merely the attribution of the thoughts and feelings of present day individuals to individuals of past societies. The abstractness of the portrayal of chronological time, which we described above, is a natural concomitant of this abstract, idealist conception of history. Golubtschik's personal history is expressed in terms of a psychological conflict engendered by the circumstances of his birth, details of which are briefly sketched in at the beginning

of his account. The true focus of Golubtschik's story is his description of the psychological impact of his dual identity. He describes in detail his early reactions to opposing elements in his consciousness, the humble Golubtschik and the noble prince Krapotkin:

So wechselten also in meinem jungen Herzen damals die Gefühle in jäher Schnelligkeit, ich fühlte mich gedemütigt, ja erniedrigt und gleich darauf - oder besser: zugleich - wieder erhaben und hochmütig, und manchmal drängten sich alle diese Gefühle gleichzeitig in mir zusammen und kämpften gegeneinander, ...
(B.M.II.657)

Although Golubtschik's focus is almost exclusively on his own subjectivity, the frequent indications in the narrative which demonstrate that he is recounting his own history with the benefit of hindsight effectively counter the assumption inherent in the narrative situation that all knowledge is self-knowledge of the subject. Golubtschik consistently makes the reader, or the listener, if we adhere to the narrative fiction, aware of the as yet unknown significance of future developments:

Bald begann ich mit meiner ersten, zwar noch nicht schändlichen Handlung. Sie sollen es sogleich hören.
(B.M.II.658)

Ich wußte damals noch nicht, um wieviel mehr ich später noch zu büßen haben sollte. (1) (B.M.II.694)

The fact that Golubtschik comments upon his own feelings and actions (2), and construes the events in his life in relation to their final development implies a breakdown

(1) See also B.M.II.697: - Die Frau aber - ihr werdet bald sehen, wie langsam, wie mörderisch langsam...

B.M.II.716: Bei mir war's eine lange Stunde, eine viel zu lange Stunde!... - wie ihr bald sehen werdet.

(2) See B.M.II.667: Damals aber sah ich es nicht, ich ahnte es nur, aber es war schon mehr als eine Ahnung.

of the subject/object identity in the narrative. This division is seen within the context of the fiction itself, in Golubtschik's dual identity, and more importantly, as we shall see later, in the structure of the novel itself, in the conscious dissolution of the narrative frame at the end of the novel. The fact that we have established that the portrayal of chronological time is abstract does not imply that there is no form of temporal ordering in the work. In fact, the very abstractness of the portrayal of time, and the concomitant emphasis of the individual psyche of Golubtschik implies an ordering of time from the perspective of an individual character. Looking back at past events, Golubtschik describes how he was able to predict his downfall:

Ich wußte damals schon um meinen Untergang, und deshalb eben gelang es mir, die beiden Gegenstände meiner Leidenschaften: den meines Hasses und den meiner Liebe, genau zu beobachten. Niemals sieht man so klar und kalt wie in einer Stunde, in der man vor sich den schwarzen Abgrund fühlt. (B.M.II.703)

Golubtschik is only able to recognize what has happened to him because of the temporal distance which separates him from the events he is describing. It is by making an object of his personal history that he is able to attain a degree of self-knowledge. The effect of Golubtschik's self-understanding is to set the "reality" of his description at one remove; we become aware of the essential contingency of "reality" within the context of the fiction. It becomes clearly the product of one man's experiences, rooted in a particularly unusual set of circumstances. The re-emergence of what Claudio Magris describes as "Die doppelte Ich-

Erzählung" (1) at the end of the novel serves to underline the point implicit in the form of Golubtschik's narrative: it undermines the notion of a stable and coherent "reality" in the fiction. The re-emergence of the first narrator, the persona of Roth himself, expresses the impossibility of arriving at a single, immutable conception of reality within the narrative. (2) The people Golubtschik describes, especially the mysterious figure of the Hungarian Jenő Lakatos, are seen to break out of the limits of Golubtschik's account and move in equally mysterious and threatening ways in the world of the first narrator.

It is Golubtschik's subjectivist conception of history which determines Lakatos' role in the development of the plot. The mysterious Hungarian becomes the embodiment of Golubtschik's illegitimate aspirations (3), of his desire to shed his former identity and take on the more illustrious role of recognized heir to prince Krapotkin, his real father. As the narrator of his own story, Golubtschik comments to the assembled company in the "Tari-Bari" on the fateful and mysterious influence Lakatos exercised on the course of his life:

(1) In: Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums, (trans. J. Prasse), Europaverlag, Wien, 1974, p.282

(2) Claudio Magris takes the opposite view: see op.cit. p.282 Die doppelte Ich-Erzählung löst keineswegs, wie es vom Gebrauch einer typischen Erzähltechnik des modernen Romans zu erwarten wäre, die objektive Realität in der Unsicherheit der verschiedenen Perspektiven auf, sie fordert im Gegenteil paradoxerweise nur die Bemühung um eine vollständige moralische Wirklichkeit.

(3) See Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.289 Pünktlich und unfehlbar stellt sich Lakatos regelmäßig zu allen existentiellen Wendepunkten in diesem Roman wie der Deus ex machina, der die Maschen des Netzes enger knüpft. Er ist das Gestalt gewordene Böse, Symbol für den Reiz des Unrechten und vor allem für die doppeldeutigen, ständig wechselnden Verkleidungen des Dämonischen;

Merken Sie daran, meine Freunde, wie grausam Gott mit mir umging, als er mir diesen parfümierten Lakatos auf die erste Kreuzung stellte, die ich auf meinem Weg zu passieren hatte. Ohne diese Begegnung wäre mein Leben ein ganz anderes geworden. (B.M.II.664)

In accordance with Golubtschik's theory

...daß alle sogenannten großen, historischen Ereignisse in Wahrheit zurückzuführen sind auf irgendein Moment im Privatleben ihrer Urheber oder auf mehrere Momente. (B.M.II.652),

Lakatos exists only as a projection of Golubtschik's desires: his existence is not motivated by any other factors in the plot. Golubtschik's own comments illustrate the extent to which the figure of Lakatos lacks any external motivation:

Wie sollte man den Teufel finden, wenn man ihn sucht. Er kommt, er erscheint unverhofft, er verschwindet. Er verschwindet, und er ist immer da. (B.M.II.729)

Golubtschik's view of his personal history is that it is determined by a series of chance encounters. His career with the secret police, the Ochrana, is the result of an inexplicable, momentary whim:

Dieses unbedachte Wort, meine lieben Freunde, hat mein Schicksal entschieden. (B.M.II.685)

Golubtschik's brief excursus on the mysterious power of language has a dual function within the novel. It is the vehicle through which Golubtschik explains to his small circle of listeners the impulse which led him to join the Ochrana. Its primary function, however, is to underpin the assertion of the non-identity of words and things which we mentioned above in relation to Golubtschik's narrative perspective:

Die Tat, die Handlung ist nur ein Phantom, verglichen

mit der Wirklichkeit und gar mit der übersinnlichen Wirklichkeit des Wortes. Die Handlung verhält sich zum Wort ungefähr wie der zweidimensionale Schatten im Kino zum dreidimensionalen Menschen oder, wenn ihr wollt, wie die Photographie zum Original. (B.M.II.685)

Golubtschik's comments are a metaphor for the principle of the construction of the novel: they attest to the power of the novel to set up its ownworld, to the real diversity which constitutes its structure. Golubtschik's report does not designate the existence of an order independent of itself: it generates a new form of expression, suggesting itself the category of truth to which it is to be referred. This self-constituting power which is characteristic of the language of Golubtschik's account is expressed in the context of the fiction through the device of the second narrator, Golubtschik, who tells his story, drawing the patrons of the "Tari-Bari" into his mysterious world for the duration of an evening. We have already stressed the temporal autonomy of the world of the Russian emigrés, which effectively underpins the establishment of a second order within the fiction. We have already seen how Roth expressed the power of language to mould a new reality by transforming words, by weaving them into a text. In his essay Schluß mit der "Neuen Sachlichkeit!" Roth stressed the extent to which the "Berichterstatter's" image of an event differentiated itself from ordinary language:

Erst das Bild, das er vom Ereignis entwirft, vermittelt seine Vorstellung von dem Ereignis - und nicht von ihm.(1)

(1) Joseph Roth. "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", Die Literarische Welt, 17.and 24.1.1930, vol.IV, p.248

The dialectic of form and content is re-affirmed as the tautologous quality of the new "reality" is expressed through the device of the narrative framework. The first narrator defers to Golubtschik's own account of his personal history, which opens up an extremely narrow perspective, whose unique internality is exposed in the final pages of the novel, where the narrative perspectives are widened again and we become aware that events which seemed confined to Golubtschik's personal history have the potential to erupt in the life of the first narrator in an equally mysterious way. The re-emergence of the "understudy", in the persona of Roth, alerts us to the power of Golubtschik's language to create its own horizons: it is the intervention of the first narrator that restores the fundamental diversity which constitutes the structure of the novel. This widening of perspectives in the concluding pages of Beichte eines Mörders exposes the false simplicity of Golubtschik's account in the context of the fiction: the apparent spontaneity of Golubtschik's account is in fact part of the atmosphere of the novel and cannot be viewed as its constitutive structure. It is only at the end of the novel that we realize the extent to which it has deviated from its original intention, the account of Golubtschik's personal history. The form of the novel thus runs parallel to the adventures recounted in it; it too offers a narrative solution which is a surprise in relation to the initial situation. Yet despite the surprise value of the ending, there are elements in Golubtschik's account which point

towards the final structural disunity of the novel: the conditions for the surprise of the ending are firmly rooted within Golubtschik's narrative. The narrative is strained between the two opposing poles of freedom and necessity, as the initial model, the problems arising from Golubtschik's dual identity, is also seen to be definitive. The final contestation of the closed unity of Golubtschik's account is prepared in his own narrative. In his reflections on the implications of his adoption of the young Krapotkin's identity, Golubtschik recounts how his assumed identity has destroyed his former existence:

Vorher hatte ich nie gewußt, daß eine falsche Existenz,...
die eigentliche, die wirkliche Existenz vernichten
könne. (B.M.II.714)

Golubtschik's stress on the falsity of his new identity reflects the extent to which he feels it is a parody of his former aspirations. As Golubtschik's parodic imitation of Krapotkin makes his own existence secondary, or even threatens to destroy it, so the re-intervention of the first narrator, the Roth-persona, at the end of the novel exposes the secondary nature of what seemed to be the primary impulse of the novel, Golubtschik's account. Similarly, the diversity which constitutes the structure of the novel is prepared by and derives its meaning from its relation to the content of Golubtschik's narrative. The dissolution of the unity of the novel is paralleled by the dissolution of Golubtschik's sense of identity:

Ich war ja längst nicht mehr ich selbst. Ich war nicht
nur kein Krapotkin mehr, ich war auch kein Golubtschik
mehr... Und was war ich eigentlich? War ich Golubtschik?
War ich Krapotkin?... Log ich, oder sagte ich die
Wahrheit? - (B.M.II.720)

The logic of Golubtschik's own existence sets a question mark over the possibility of arriving at a single conception of "reality" within the novel. As the novel itself is strained between two opposing sets of conditions, so Golubtschik sees himself confronted with the uncertain delights presented to him by his love affair with Lutetia, and the private hell of the breakdown of his sense of identity. Golubtschik's exposition of his reactions to Lutetia's compulsive lying about her social origins encapsulates and expresses the structural operations of the novel. Golubtschik senses that Lutetia is lying and is prompted to the following reflections:

Und log ich nicht etwas selber? Lebte ich nicht vollkommen eingebaut, hatte ich mich nicht behaglich eingenistet in der Lüge, dermaßen, daß ich nicht nur eine eigene Lüge liebte, sondern auch alle fremden Lügen zumindest anerkennen und schätzen mußte? (B.M.II.722)

Golubtschik's realization is paralleled by the way in which the novel itself is realized: as Golubtschik arrests the deepest, most inaccessible levels of Lutetia's personality and gives it a definite form, so the unexpected appearance of Lakatos in the former narrator's concluding paragraphs also interrupts and gives definitive form to Golubtschik's narrative. Just as Golubtschik is forced to identify Lutetia's lying, so in confronting Golubtschik's story, the first narrator gives a determinate representation of it, exposing its closed necessity. The form of the "Rahmenerzählung" is thus seen to point beyond itself and highlight the limits of realism. Yet the first narrator cannot step beyond the realist framework which he established in the opening pages of the novel. In challenging the closed factitiousness of

Golubtschik's account by demonstrating how the events in Golubtschik's narrative pass beyond the limits of his account, the first narrator not only relates the ending of the novel to its opening pages, but also firmly establishes himself as a character in the novel. Thus Roth avoids severe divisions of meaning in Beichte eines Mörders, while highlighting the spurious autonomy of Golubtschik's account. The relation of the end of the novel to the beginning re-affirms the suspension of the measured flow of chronological time we noted above in relation to Golubtschik's attitude to history. The abstractness of the portrayal of chronological time and what Magris describes as "die kreisförmige Struktur des Romans selbst" (1) are not merely tokens of Roth's "äußersten Antihistorizismus" (2), but have a function within the framework of the novel itself: the structure of the novel, as we have seen, emerges in a dialectical relation to the definitive impulse of Golubtschik's dual identity. As the circumstances of Golubtschik's existence make him unable to arrive at a fixed sense of his own identity, yet allow him certain freedom of choice within these constraints, so the narrative, although bound by the limits of realism, points to the inadequacy of a single definition of "reality", encapsulated and expressed by the rejection of the measured flow of chronological time. We have already seen how Golubtschik's conscious subjectivism implies the impossibility of

(1) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.287

(2) Claudio Magris, op.cit. p.287.

formulating a definitive conception of history. The dialectic of form and content is re-affirmed in the ending of the novel which re-locates the more mysterious elements of Golubtschik's history in the consciousness of the first narrator. We are reminded at this point of Lukács' illustration of the implications of a subjectivist attitude to history. Lukács cites Croce as a final example of this trend:

"...deshalb sind diese Historien für mich in diesem Augenblick keine Geschichte, sondern höchstens Titel von Geschichtsbüchern. Geschichte sind sie, oder werden sie sein, für diejenigen, die sie gedacht haben oder sie denken werden, und für mich sind sie es gewesen, als ich sie gedacht und meinem geistigen Bedürfnis gemäß verarbeitet habe, und sie werden es wieder sein, wenn ich sie wieder denken werde." (1)

Similarly, the objective "reality" of Golubtschik's account is undermined by the emphasis on history as a brief, fleeting experience. The manner of Lakatos' sudden eruption into the world of the first narrator after Golubtschik has finished his account is a parody of his first appearance: the narrator describes how he was accosted by the avuncular Lakatos in precisely the same way as Golubtschik was:

"Sie sind auch fremd hier, nicht wahr?"
Es klang in meinen Ohren wie ein Echo. Ich erinnerte mich, daß ich diese gleiche Frage heute - oder war es gestern? - schon gehört hatte. Ja, ja! Diese Frage, der Mörder Golubtschik hatte sie erwähnt, mochte sie in der Nacht erwähnt haben, oder vielleicht auch hatte sie nicht wörtlich so gelautet! Zugleich entsann ich mich des Namens: "Jenö Lakatos",...
(B.M.II.765)

It is through the reappearance of Lakatos in the concluding

(1) In: Georg Lukács. Probleme des Realismus III, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied/Berlin, 1965, p.219

pages of the novel that Roth alerts us to the internal relations of the work, and sets up an interpretative framework. At the point where Golubtschik's narrative seems to have reached its formless conclusion with the reappearance of the now wizened Lutetia, it is re-cast through the device of the parodic conclusion into an irreducible formed whole, and the reader is alerted to its true genesis. The re-introduction of the first narrator serves to remind us that Golubtschik's history is a narrative within a narrative, and is thus the expression of the absence of a single definition of reality within the fiction. Through the device of the "doppelte Ich-Erzählung", (see above page 266, note 2), the contingent quality of Golubtschik's experience is highlighted: his experiences are expressed in terms of the first narrator's curiosity. By relating the end of the novel to the beginning Roth not only effectively proclaims that "reality" resists being defined as homogeneous, he also counters the tendency to make the present absolute, which is implicit in the abandonment of the measured flow of chronological time to the flux of subjective duration as it is expressed in Golubtschik's account.

The dialectic of form and content is reaffirmed in the closing pages of the novel. Just as the discernible image of Lakatos arises at the crossing point between the experiences of the two narrators, so "reality" within the novel is seen to be a subjective construct, variable and flexible, thus implying the diversity which characterizes

the structure of Beichte eines Mörders.

The ironic intervention of the first narrator reflects the conditions of the novel's possibility. The initial impulse of the novel is firmly rooted in Roth's cosmic irony, in his refusal to state finally where the truth lies. It is this fundamental irony which dictates the flexibility of the dual narrative perspective (1), and which will play an increasingly important role in Roth's last works.

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- (1) As we have seen (page 266, note 2), Magris takes the opposite view, asserting that the fractured narrative perspective does not break down the visible image of "objective reality". Magris' interpretations are firmly rooted in his consideration of Roth from the point of view of his relation to the Jewish cultural tradition; yet it seems that our view can also be related to Jewish cultural values. What we have described as Roth's "cosmic irony", his reluctance to state where the truth lies, may be related to the cabbalistic idea that speech rather than pictures was the only way of approaching God, and to the distinction between Hebrew, the sacred language, and the profane language of the Diaspora. Traditional Jewish cultural belief prohibited the naming or describing of God in the profane language.

For a study of the relation between German philosophy and traditional Jewish cultural values see Jürgen Habermas. "Der deutsche Idealismus der jüdischen Philosophen", in: Philosophisch-politische Profile, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1971.

Chapter XII.

Das falsche Gewicht

In the preceding chapter we saw how both the content and the form of Beichte eines Mörders, with its wide array of narrative perspectives, was dictated by Roth's refusal to state directly where a measure of truth can be found. The structure of the novel is centered on the fundamental disjunction between "Wort" and "Handlung", and focusses our attention on the inability of language to give an adequate picture of reality. As Golubtschik grows in stature, he is able to express the impossibility of arriving at a single, irreducible definition of reality:

Die Tat, die Handlung ist nur ein Phantom, verglichen mit der Wirklichkeit und gar mit der übersinnlichen Wirklichkeit des Wortes. Die Handlung verhält sich zum Wort ungefähr wie der zweidimensionale Schatten im Kino zum dreidimensionalen lebendigen Menschen oder, wenn ihr wollt, wie die Photographie zum Original. (B.M.II.685)

Our examination of Das falsche Gewicht. Die Geschichte eines Eichmeisters. (1937), will show that it is this essential incompatibility between the field of human action, which is constantly evolving, and fixed, clearly defined logical categories which is once again Roth's concern in the later novel. As we shall see, Anselm Eibenschütz's existence is strained to breaking point between two polar opposites, between his faith in an abstract conception of justice, and the formless development of his life in an alien and hostile environment. The desperate sense of anomie which sweeps over the conscientious "Eichmeister" in the remote

province (1) finds its pale image in Roth's own statements about his novel, in which he firmly relates the opposed determinations in the work to the conditions of its possibility. Roth's reflections are preserved, albeit in imperfect form, in the Russian writer Ilja Ehrenburg's memory of a conversation with Roth about Das falsche Gewicht:

Ich habe einen Roman über einen Inspektor der Maße und Gewichte geschrieben... Mein Inspektor lebte schlecht und verworren: wie ich... Vor dem Tod phantasiert er. Er glaubt, er sei nicht Inspektor, sondern Krämer, und zu ihm kommt der allerhöchste... Inspektor, und seine Waage ist ungenau... Er sagt zum Inspektor: "Freilich sind meine Gewichte leichter als vorgeschrieben. Aber so ist es bei allen: Anders kann man in unserer Stadt nicht leben." Wissen Sie, was ihm da der... Inspektor erwidert? Er sagt, genaue Waagen gebe es überhaupt nicht. Ihre Freunde sagen, ich wolle Schuschnigg entschuldigen. Dabei hatte ich nur Leute wie mich im Sinn.(2)

As in Beichte eines Mörders, the initial impulse of the novel is thus firmly rooted in Roth's refusal to state finally where a measure of truth can be found. Our examination of Das falsche Gewicht will demonstrate how this irony shapes the development of the novel.

The final contestation of the idea of an abstract and immutable theory of justice is but the last stage of a development whose limits are clearly defined by the

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- (1) The narrator describes Eibenschütz's sense of hopelessness as follows: Seine Frau: was war sie ihm!- Zum erstenmal fragte er sich, warum und wozu er sie geheiratet hatte. Darüber erschrak er gewaltig. Er erschrak darüber gewaltig, weil er sich selbst niemals zugetraut hätte, daß er überhaupt erschrecken könnte. Es kam ihm vor, daß er, wie man sagt, aus der Bahn geworfen sei -... (f.G.II.774)
- (2) Ilja Ehrenburg. Menschen, Jahre, Leben. Autobiographie. München, 1962, p.726, in: David Bronsen. Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, p.577.

personal circumstances of Eibenschütz, as described by an authoritative narrator. From the outset Eibenschütz is presented as being torn between the demands of an existence singularly lacking in guidelines for conduct, and a forlorn longing for the organized rigour of army life. The narrator describes how Eibenschütz, having given in to his wife's demands that he leave the army, fervently regrets the passing of the security afforded him in military service:

Er hatte Zivilkleider nicht gern, es war ihm zumute wie etwa einer Schnecke, die man zwingt, ihr Haus zu verlassen, das sie aus ihrem eigenen Speichel, also aus ihrem Fleisch und Blut, ein viertel Schneckenleben lang gebaut hat. (f.G.II.770)

The end of his army career robs Eibenschütz of all sense of purpose and feeling of security in life:

Sehr einsam war er, und er fühlte sich fremd und heimatlos in der ungewohnten Zivilkleidung, nachdem er zwölf Jahre in seiner dunkelbraunen Artillerie-Uniform gehaust hatte. (f.G.II.774)

The loss of a set of clearly defined rules of conduct exposes Eibenschütz to the complexities and uncertainties of an unordered existence:

Bei den Soldaten war alles geregelt... Die Verantwortung eines jeden Soldaten für alles, was er tat, und für alles, was er unterließ, lag irgendwo hoch über ihm, er wußte selber gar nicht wo. Wie leicht und frei war da Leben in der Kaserne gewesen! (f.G.II.777)

As the horizons of his objective existence broaden, the narrator makes it clear that the possibilities for a transformed personal future are extremely remote. Robbed of the defining rigour of the army, Eibenschütz is incapable of making any decisions regarding the development of his own life: he views his life through the prism of military rules

of conduct, and can no longer react spontaneously to his to his wife's infidelity:

Er hatte nur eine flüchtige Vorstellung davon, daß seine Ehre beschädigt war - aber auch diese Vorstellung stammte lediglich aus der Militärzeit her und aus der Erinnerung an die Ehrbegriffe seiner Vorgesetzten, der Herren Offiziere. (f.G.II.783)

Time and time again the narrator stresses Eibenschütz's complete inability to come to an independent decision:

Er war nicht gewohnt zu entscheiden. Zwölf Jahre hatte er gedient. Er war gewohnt zu gehorchen. Wäre er doch in der Kaserne, bei der Armee geblieben! (f.G.II.813)

The disintegration of what Eibenschütz had considered to be an integral world order, and a guarantor of a degree of stability, is paralleled and highlighted by the narrator's description of the "Eichmeister's" complete isolation from those around him. Eibenschütz's inarticulated resentment that his wife made him abandon his army career crystallizes in his realization of the ultimate sterility of their relationship: the narrator frequently demonstrates Eibenschütz's isolation by highlighting his complete inability to communicate directly with his wife. Even on the occasions when the "Eichmeister" addresses his wife, he is unable to express himself frankly. In full knowledge of his wife's deceit, Eibenschütz conceals his responses:

"Ich möchte endlich ein Kind haben." Von wem? wollte er fragen, denn er dachte natürlich sofort an den Brief. Aber er sagte nur: "Warum jetzt? Du hast dir nie eins gewünscht..." (1) (f.G.II.782-3)

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- (1) See also f.G.II.818: Er wollte sagen, er sei pflicht- und dienstgemäß hierhergekommen, aber er sagte: "Ich wollte sie wiedersehen!" and f.G.II.850: Er wollte etwas sagen. Er will zum Beispiel sagen: Es geht nicht, lieber Mann, es ist ein Gesetz. Er will sogar sagen: Ich hasse dieses Gesetz und mich auch dazu. Aber er sagt nichts.

Even after he has directly confronted his wife with his knowledge of her infidelity, Eibenschütz shows himself incapable of taking any decisive action regarding his own affairs. Although he dismisses his clerk, Nowak, after having learned of his liaison with his wife, Eibenschütz makes no attempt to change his relationship with Regina. Instead he escapes from his unfortunate domestic situation into the alien and mysterious world of Leibusch Jadowker's "Grenzschenke". Eibenschütz's isolation, already noted by the narrator, is now complete. (1)

As we have seen, Eibenschütz's essential isolation stems from his complete inability to come to terms with the loss of clearly established criteria of judgement. The way of life in the remote border province provides a complete contrast. The inhabitants of the inhospitable region are not subject to any external system of regulation: the standards they apply, both literally and metaphorically, arise out of the context of their existence, and are inextricably bound to the way in which the community as a whole functions. Eibenschütz, as a representative of external agencies of control, is viewed with intense suspicion:

Sie wogen in der Hand und sie maßen mit dem Aug'.
Es war keine günstige Gegend für einen staatlichen
Eichmeister. (f.G.II.771)
Denn die Leute in dieser Gegend betrachteten alle
jene, welche die Forderungen an Recht, Gesetz,
Gerechtigkeit und Staat unerbittlich vertraten,
als geborene Feinde. (f.G.II.772)

(1) See f.G.II.785: In diese Gegend kamen keine Zeitungen von gestern und vorgestern, sondern Zeitungen, die mindestens eine Woche alt waren. Eibenschütz kaufte sie niemals. Die Vorgänge in der Welt gingen ihn gar nichts an.

The overpowering community of interest which forces Eibenschütz into the position of an outsider is further highlighted by the descriptions of landscape in the novel. The hostility of the people is further underlined by the harshness of the scenery:

...es ging ja gar nicht so sehr darum, zu verstehen, was die Menschen sagten, sondern, was das Land selber sprach. Und das Land redete fürchterlich: es redete Schnee, Finsternis, Kälte und Eiszapfen,... (f.G.II.772)

The breakdown of the normality of the relation between Eibenschütz and the world around him is reflected in the reversal of the normal patterns in nature:

...obwohl der Kalender den Frühling erzählte... Hier aber, in Zlotogrod, krächzten die Krähen in den kahlen Weiden und Kastanien. In ganzen Büscheln hingen sie an den nackten Zweigen, und es sah aus, als wären sie gar keine Vögel, sondern eine Art geflügelter Früchte. (1) (f.G.II.772-3)

In response to the disintegration of his relationship with his wife, Eibenschütz seeks refuge in Jadowker's "Grenz-schenke" in Szwaby. Yet the narrator makes it clear that the "Eichmeister's" fascination with Euphemia Nikitisch, Jadowker's gypsy lover, can in no way replace the sense of order and security which has been absent from the "Eichmeister's" life since he left the army. The influence Euphemia exerts on Eibenschütz is as mysterious as her own origins:

Als sie sich ihm gegenüber niedersetzte, war es ihm, als erlebte er ein großes Wunder; als setzten sich das unbekannte Meer, ein merkwürdiger Schnee, eine seltsame Nacht an seinen Tisch. (f.G.II.789)

Far from restoring a sense of order into Eibenschütz's

(1) See also f.G.II.792: Der Winter kam, und es war ein unerbittlicher Winter. Die Spatzen fielen von den Dächern, überreifen Früchten ähnlich, die im Frühjahr von den Bäumen fallen.

life, Euphemia exerts a curious and disturbing influence which the "Eichmeister" himself cannot fathom:

Er wußte nicht, weshalb er den Leibusch Jadlowker so haßte. Er wußte nicht, warum er immerfort im Herzen, im Gehirn, überall, das gefährliche Klingeln der Ohrringe hörte. (f.G.II.803)

Eibenschütz's unarticulated longing for the mysterious gypsy does not restore his former stable conception of the limits of his own personality, a sense of security which was the natural concomitant of his military career. Once again the authoritative narrator describes how Eibenschütz's tentative relationship with Euphemia results in the further disintegration of his sense of personal identity:

Es war ihm, während er so oben über den Tisch daherredete, als wäre er zwei, ein oberer und ein unterer Eibenschütz. Oben trank und sprach er. Unten aber, im guten Dunkel unter dem Tisch und unter dem Tisch-tuch, suchte sein sehnächtiges Knie die neuerliche Berührung mit Euphemia. (f.G.II.806)

In an article entitled Der Sonderfall als exemplarischer Fall - Joseph Roth und die Emigration als Grenzsituation (1),

David Bronsen sets out to document and explain the psychological impact of the crisis years of Roth's enforced emigration. Bronsen explains the nature of Roth's progressive psychological collapse in terms of Karl Jasper's¹ conception of the disastrous consequences of the "Grenzsituation" on the human psyche. Jasper's description of its impact can equally well be applied to the personal crisis Anselm Eibenschütz undergoes in Das falsche Gewicht:

Den Prozessen, die alles in Frage stellen, die alles als ein bloß Endliches überwinden lassen, widerstrebt

(1) In: Exil und Innere Emigration II., ed. Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Egon Schwarz, Athenäum Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1973, pp.65-84.

ein Drang in uns zum Festen und zur Ruhe. Wir ertragen nicht den unendlichen Tausel aller Begriffe, die relativiert, aller Existenzformen, die fragwürdig werden. Es wird uns schwindlig, und es vergeht uns das Bewußtsein unserer Existenz. Es ist ein Trieb in uns, daß irgend etwas endgültig, und fertig sein soll. Etwas soll "richtig" sein,... Der Mensch lehnt es ab, immer nur von Aufgaben und Fraglichkeiten zu leben. Er verlangt Rezepte für sein Handeln, endgültige Institutionen. Der Prozeß soll irgendeinmal zur Vollendung kommen: das Sein, die Einheit, die Geschlossenheit und die Ruhe werden geliebt. (1)

Not only does Euphemia's influence further undermine Eibenschütz's sense of identity, it also fundamentally challenges the once clear outlines of his concept of his duties as an inspector of weights and measures. Jadowker's confident expectations that he can safely flout Eibenschütz's authority are seen to be quite unfounded. The narrator describes how Eibenschütz, driven by his passion for Euphemia, clearly steps beyond the bounds of his duty and prosecutes the hapless Jadowker; the narrator raises the following objections to Jadowker's confident predictions:

es kann ein Augenblick kommen,...so erwacht zum Beispiel eine ungeahnte Leidenschaft in einem Beamten. Beamte sind auch Menschen. (f.G.II.801)

Yet Eibenschütz's action against his rival Jadowker is no solution to his problem. It merely leaves him with a sense of unease which he cannot define:

Dem Eichmeister Eibenschütz aber war es, als hätte man ihn und nicht den Leibusch Jadowker verurteilt. Weshalb - das wußte er nicht, das wußte er keineswegs. (f.G.II.809)

The motive for Eibenschütz's action had been to secure a replacement for the sense of order which had been absent from his life since he left the army: Euphemia however,

(1) Karl Jaspers "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen" (Berlin, Göttingen, Heidelberg 1960) p.304, cit.in David Bronsen. "Der Sonderfall als exemplarischer Fall. Joseph Roth und die Emigration als Grenzsituation", pp.66-67.

withdraws completely from his horizons:

Er sah sich trotzdem um, nach der Frau Euphemia.
Aber sie war verschwunden, auf eine merkwürdige
Weise verschwunden. (f.G.II.809)

Eibenschütz's "Drang...zum Festen und zur Ruhe" (see previous page, note 1), thus remains unfulfilled. We have already seen on several occasions how the "unendliche Taumel aller Begriffe" sets its stamp on Eibenschütz's existence. Jadowker's trial and its outcome, the removal of Eibenschütz's rival from the "Grenzschenke" in Szvaby, increases the "Eichmeister's" scope for decisive individual action, which, however, he is incapable of taking. Far from imposing an intelligible pattern on Eibenschütz's life, his actions lead to an even more intense experience of existential uncertainty. The narrator documents Eibenschütz's reactions to the news that he will assume responsibility for the "Grenzschenke" during Jadowker's imprisonment:

...er glaubte, ein Glück und ein Unglück hätten ihn zu gleicher Zeit betroffen, und ihm war zumute wie etwa einem Manne, der träumt, er stünde auf weitem, freien Felde, ausgeliefert zwei Winden zugleich, einem Nordwind und einem Südwind. Das bittere Leid und die süße Freude atmeten ihn gleichzeitig und heftig an.
(f.G.II.813)

The dialectical relationship between form and content is reaffirmed as the "unendlichen Taumel aller Begriffe" which characterizes Eibenschütz's existence and which is incorporated into the structure of the narrative itself. The essential contingency of "reality" within the context of the fiction is most clearly expressed through the narrator's ironic treatment of Jadowker's trial. The conflicting impulses at play within Eibenschütz's own psyche are retained in the narrative, but ultimately

transcended and cancelled out as the full ironic force of the narrator's comments exposes the unique internality of the "Eichmeister's" world. The measure and restraint of the narrator's presentation, encapsulated in the opening lines of the novel which define the context of the fiction ("Es war einmal" (f.G.II.769)) emerge with even greater clarity in his description of Jadowker's trial: the authority of the narrator is in fact a clear demonstration of the power of the novel to set up its own world, to constitute its own "reality". The narrator makes it clear that the "facts" of Jadowker's case do not give an adequate representation of his life: they are the necessary products of Eibenschütz's uniquely restricted view of the case. Although Jadowker's life has apparently been thoroughly investigated, the authoritative narrator points beyond the "facts" of the case to the unexplored dimensions of Jadowker's existence:

Man hatte sein ganzes Leben durchstöbert. Man hatte herausgebracht, daß er aus Rußland eingewandert war. Man hatte ferner herausgebracht, daß er...einen Mann in Odessa umgebracht hatte, mit einem Zuckerhut. Er hatte aber mehrere und nicht einen umgebracht, und deshalb schwieg er. Er hieß auch gar nicht Jadowker, sondern Kramrisch. (f.G.II.808-9)

Jadowker's past deeds fade into insignificance as the course of events in his life, and indeed as the direction of the narrative itself, seems to point towards a reiteration of Golubtschik's remarks on the mysterious power of language in Beichte eines Mörders:

Die Tat, die Handlung ist nur ein Phantom, verglichen mit der Wirklichkeit und gar mit der übersinnlichen Wirklichkeit des Wortes. (B.M.II.685)

This transcendental quality of language also characterizes

the independence and distance of the narrative perspective. Eibenschütz's experience is used by the narrator to illustrate one possible route towards a degree of self-knowledge; the narrator's model is logically prior to Eibenschütz's particular experience:

Die meisten sterben dahin, ohne von sich auch nur ein Körnchen Wahrheit erfahren zu haben... Manchen aber ist es vergönnt, noch in diesem Leben zu erkennen, was sie eigentlich sind... Zu dieser Art Menschen gehörte der Eichmeister Eibenschütz. (f.G.II.816)

The ironic impulse which sets its stamp on the structure of the novel is thus firmly rooted in the narrative perspective. The viability of a system of rigid categorization is questioned through the development of the narrative itself. Roth achieves this by exploiting the contradiction between the gradual dissolution of the rigid, supportive categories of Eibenschütz's existence and the authoritative, structuring role of the narrator. The gradual broadening of the threshold of Eibenschütz's experience is expressed through the narrator's description of the "Eichmeister's" increased sensitivity to the natural world:

Warum empfand er auf einmal alle Veränderungen in der Natur? Was war ihm denn die Natur sein Leben lang gewesen, dem Feuerwerker Eibenschütz? Klare Sicht oder schwache Sicht. Ein Exerzierplatz. (1) (f.G.II.816)

The narrator also indicates that Eibenschütz's increased awareness is not restricted in its scope to the mere registration of changes in nature. Eibenschütz sees through Kapturak's ingratiating approaches.

Der Eichmeister haßte diese untertänige Vertraulichkeit.

(1) See also f.G.II.819-20: Was geht mich der Regen an? Ich muß mich stark verändert haben in dieser Gegend! Was geht mich der Regen an? Was kümmern mich die Vögel?

Merkwürdigerweise mußte er selbst feststellen, daß ihn seine wachsende Empfindlichkeit gegenüber den Vorgängen der Natur auch empfindlicher machte gegen die Schlechtigkeit der Menschen. (f.G.II.817)

Yet the dissolution of the rigid categories which severely restrict Eibenschütz's capacity for experience does not imply the emergence of a unity of conscious and unconscious. Time and time again the narrator makes it clear that the "Eichmeister" consistently fails to take responsibility for the direction of his own life. The narrator illustrates how it is in fact lack of will, rather than any decisive action that leads the "Eichmeister" back to the "Grenz-schenke", and to a brief spell of happiness with Euphemia:

Plötzlich, der wußte selbst nicht warum, zog er die Zügel an, und der Schimmel hielt still... Er kehrt plötzlich um. Er knallt mit der Peitsche. Der Schimmel setzt sich in Galopp. Kaum eine halbe Stunde später ist er wieder in Szwaby. (f.G.II.820)

As we saw in the chapters on Zipper und sein Vater and Rechts und Links, the disintegration of what had been considered an integral, stable world order, is paralleled and highlighted by an image of the breakdown of ordered temporal progression. The present tense of the narrator's description of Eibenschütz's return to Szwaby implies the erosion of the logical progression of the "Eichmeister's" experience. The narrator also indicates Eibenschütz's perception of the lack of continuity which characterizes his life:

Sehr jung fühlte er sich, und es war ihm, als ob er bis zu dieser Stunde noch gar nichts erlebt hätte, überhaupt gar nichts. Sein Leben sollte erst beginnen. (f.G.II.819)

Eibenschütz's completely subjective orientation renders him incapable of taking decisive action. His inability to

take responsibility for the direction of his life is expressed in the narrator's use of the impersonal pronoun "man" to describe the "Eichmeister's" actions:

Man spielt eine Partie Tarock,... Man wartet vergeblich auf Euphemia... Man weiß nicht, was man machen soll. Man spricht kein Wort,... Man wartet auf Euphemia... (f.G.II.820-1)

As Eibenschütz's sense of purpose disintegrates still further, the reader becomes aware of a new phase in the cumulative dialectical process. The "Eichmeister's" increasing sense of hopelessness both implies and reaffirms the validity of the narrator's authoritative perspective. Roth's rejection of the possibility of arriving at an invariable, static definition of the essence of Eibenschütz's personality is reflected in the clear differentiation of the narrator's perspective from Eibenschütz's. The "Eichmeister's" hopelessness, his loss of a sense of personal identity, necessitates the role of the narrator as authoritative commentator: as Eibenschütz has retreated still further into silence, it falls to the narrator to describe his actions:

Gar vieles, sehr vieles ging in seinem Kopf durcheinander. Er begriff, daß er nichts mehr Vernünftiges sagen könnte, und er mußte doch etwas tun, und Euphemia saß neben ihm. Er umfing sie plötzlich und küßte sie herzlich und heftig. (f.G.II.822)

The narrator describes how Eibenschütz gradually comes to terms with his ever increasing isolation, with his complete lack of contact with those around him:

Ach, wie einsam war da der Eichmeister Eibenschütz!... In seiner riesengroßen Einsamkeit erschienen ihm die paar Menschen, die er kannte, wie verlorene Fliegen in einer eisigen Wüste... Auch suchte er gar nicht mehr nach den Menschen. Und er fühlte sich beinahe wohl in seiner Wüste. (f.G.II.830)

The outbreak of cholera which sweeps over the inhabitants of Zlotogrod with such devastating results re-enforces Eibenschütz's extreme passivity, his inability to take responsibility for his own life. The narrator describes how Eibenschütz passively awaits death:

Seit dem Tod seiner Frau trank er, nicht etwa aus Angst vor dem Tod, sondern aus Sehnsucht nach dem Tod. (f.G.II.841)

The narrator also indicates the extent to which the "Eichmeister" is unaware of the changes he is undergoing:

Nachdem er drei solcher Schlucke getan hatte, schien es ihm, er sei wieder der alte Eichmeister Anselm Eibenschütz. In Wirklichkeit war er es nicht. Es war ein ganz neuer, ein ganz veränderter Anselm Eibenschütz. (f.G.II.842)

The limitations of Eibenschütz's personal horizons, his lack of contact with other people and his increasing self-alienation make him increasingly dependent on the rigid categories which define his existence:

Eibenschütz sagte:...Laß ihn streichen, Eibenschütz! Es war nur der alte, der frühere Eibenschütz, der so sprach. Der neue Eibenschütz aber sagte: Gesetz ist Gesetz, und hier steht der Wachtmeister Piotrak, und ich war selbst zwölf Jahre Soldat, und außerdem bin ich selbst sehr unglücklich. (f.G.II.845)

It is Eibenschütz's unwarranted persecution of the pious Mendel Singer and his family that incites the irascible Jadlowker, who has managed to escape from prison, to take his revenge on Eibenschütz. The "Eichmeister" is the only obstacle on Jadlowker's path; Kapturak provides the only solution:

"Der Eibenschütz muß weg", sagte er - und blieb stehen.
"Wieso?" fragte Jadlowker.
"Zuckerhut!" sagte Kapturak, - nichts anderes.
(f.G.II.857)

The unsuspecting Eibenschütz is murdered by Jadlowker on

his return to the "Grenzschenke" in Szwaby.

Eibenschütz's final vision is the apotheosis of the fundamental disjunction between "Wort" and "Handlung" which informs the structure of the novel. Here the "übersinnliche Wirklichkeit des Wortes" (B.M.II.685) is translated into literal narrative fact:

Er ist kein Eichmeister mehr, er ist selbst ein Händler. Lauter falsche Gewichte hat er, tausend, zehntausend falsche Gewichte...herein kommt der große Eichmeister, der größte aller Eichmeister - so scheint es Eibenschütz... Gut, mögen sie jetzt die Gewichte prüfen, sagt sich der Eichmeister Eibenschütz. Falsch sind sie, aber was kann ich dagegen machen? Ich bin ein Händler wie alle Händler in Zlotograd. Ich verkaufe nach falschen Gewichten... Der große Eichmeister beginnt, die Gewichte zu prüfen. Schließlich sagt er-..."Alle deine Gewichte sind falsch, und alle sind dennoch richtig. Wir werden dich also nicht anzeigen! Wir glauben, daß alle Gewichte richtig sind. Ich bin der große Eichmeister. (f.G.II.860-1)

Eibenschütz's final vision arises at the crossing point between Roth's critique of language as an inappropriate tool for recognizing the true pattern of things, and a demonstration of the power of the novel to set up its own world, to define its own reality. The close relationship between form and content is reaffirmed in the concluding pages of the novel: as Eibenschütz's vision is demonstrably a product of his own consciousness, so the ordering and defining role of the narrator is seen to structure the "reality" in the novel. In the "Eichmeister's" final vision Roth returns to the linguistic concerns that had preoccupied him in his earlier essay, Die weißen Städte.(1)

(1) Die weißen Städte, no date, vol.III, pp.880-934

In this essay Roth explores the deficiencies of language when it is viewed as a tool for recognizing the structure of the world around us. Roth highlights the tendencies of language to direct our perceptions and to focus our attention on small units in an attempt to make an intelligible pattern of a reality which is continually evolving. In Das falsche Gewicht he demonstrates the inability of a rigid system of abstract concepts to adequately express the constantly evolving field of human action. His literary enterprise culminates in a forcible demonstration of the essential, unbridgeable disjunction between "Wort" and "Handlung":

Die Begriffe, die wir kennen, decken nicht mehr die Dinge. Die Dinge sind aus den engen Kleidern herausgewachsen, die wir ihnen angepaßt haben. (1)

Roth points to the essential meaninglessness of such abstractions (2) as "falsch" or "richtig" when they are viewed as existing outside the field created by the irreducible mediations between subject and object, particular and universal. The crucial importance of such mediation is illustrated in the context of the fiction itself. Eibenschütz's narrow existence in the remote province is the epitome of the absence of the vital interplay of the particular and the universal. It was to this type of mediation which Mauthner referred in his attempt at a definition of external reality, which is characteristically

(1) Die weißen Städte, p.882

(2) Hofmannsthal also refers to the meaninglessness of abstract words in Ein Brief.

Ich empfand ein unerklärliches Unbehagen, die Worte "Geist", "Seele" oder "Körper" nur auszusprechen.
in: Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Prosa II, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1951, p.12.

expressed as an approximation. Mauthner, like Roth, was aware that "Die Namen flossen immer weit um die Dinge, die Kleider waren lose." (1)

...Wir dürfen nur etwa sagen: die Wirklichkeit besteht in irgend einer Art von Übereinstimmung zwischen der Außenwelt und unserer Innenwelt. (2)

On the face of things, Euphemia's lover Sameschkin seems to be the embodiment of this harmony between the outer and inner worlds. The congruence of "Innen"/"Außen" is conveyed through Sameschkin's harmonious relationship with the natural world. The gentle rhythm of his life is imposed by the changing of the seasons. The narrator describes the extent to which Sameschkin is moulded by his environment.

Sameschkin kam immer im Oktober... Er sah sehr fremd aus und so, als hätte man auch ihn gebraten. Die Sonne von Bessarabien und vom Kaukasus und von der Krim hatte ihn so gebraten. Seine kleinen, schnellen Augen erinnerten an die Holzkohlen, auf denen er seine Kastanien briet,... (f.G.II.823)

As we have seen, the scope of Eibenschütz's experience is clearly delimited by the fixed categories which he considers govern his existence and give meaning to his life. It was the stable order of the army which imposed an intelligible pattern on Eibenschütz's confused existence. Roth's comments in Die weißen Städte adequately express the "Eichmeister's" inflexible attitude:

In Deutschland ist der "Begriff" heilig und unwandelbar. Wir glauben an die Nomenklatur. (3)

(1) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.882

(2) Fritz Mauthner. "Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache", 1.Bd., p.639, in: Walter Eschenbacher. Fritz Mauthner und die deutsche Literatur um 1900. Eine Untersuchung zur Sprachkrise der Jahrhundertwende, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, Herbert Lang, Berlin, 1977, p.38

(3) Die weißen Städte, p.882

It is through the figure of Sameschkin that Roth seeks to explore the other side of the fence which marks the limits of rigidly defined concepts. In Die weißen Städte Roth expresses his desire to probe the motive content of the constantly evolving flux of human experience.(1)

Ich war neugierig, zu erfahren, wie es hinter dem Zaun aussieht, der uns umgibt. Denn uns umgibt ein Zaun, uns Menschen, die wir zur deutschen Welt sprechen. (2)

Roth goes on to characterize the realm behind fixed concepts as follows:

Man war nicht bestrebt, alles unverrückbar zu fixieren. Man wandelt sich jeden Augenblick, drüben, hinter dem Zaun. (3)

In the context of Das falsche Gewicht, Sameschkin becomes the embodiment of this reluctance to give a rigid definition of the categories of existence: after the death of Eibenschütz, and the arrest and detention of Jadowker and Kapturak, Sameschkin feels unable to commit himself further to his long-standing relationship with Euphemia:

"Auf nächstes Jahr", sagte sie. Aber Sameschkin glaubte es ihr nicht mehr. So töricht, wie er den Leuten erscheinen mochte, war er nicht. Er ahnte alles, und er beschloß bei sich, nie mehr in diese giftige Gegend zu kommen. (f.G.II.881-2)

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- (1) Walter Eschenbacher (op.cit.p.76) points to a key difference in the attitude of contemporary writers' to Mauthner's view of the implications of the crisis of language. Eschenbacher's comments can be applied to Roth's literary enterprise: Dabei zeigt sich jedoch ein erheblicher Unterschied im Vergleich zu Mauthners Theorie. Die Schriftsteller neigen nämlich viel weniger zu der einseitigen Überbetonung der "Macht der Sprache" über den Gedanken; sie sehen statt dessen einen größeren Freiraum des Denkens, das sich ständig neue Formen der sprachlichen Vermittlung erst suchen muß und kann.
- (2) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.882
- (3) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.882

We have already noted that the rhythm of Sameschkin's life is in complete accord with the changing of the seasons. The essential fluidity, the infinite flexibility of the notional world is expressed in Sameschkin's readiness to depart from the "giftigen Gegend" of Zlotogrod. The events which have overtaken the inhabitants of the region have as little power over Sameschkin's existence as they have over the continual passing of the seasons:

Es war ein großartiger Frühlingstag, an dem er wegzog... Die Lerchen trillerten hoch am Himmel, und die Frösche quakten ebenso fröhlich unten in den Sümpfen. Und er ging, der gute Sameschkin, so für sich hin, so des Weges dahin. Was ging ihn eigentlich all dies an? (f.G.II.862)

Sameschkin's question is one that must remain unanswered in the context of Das falsche Gewicht. Just as the untoward circumstances in Zlotogrod afford Sameschkin no certainty as to his ultimate destination, so Roth's views on language, described in the essay Die weißen Städte and exemplified in narrative form in Das falsche Gewicht prohibit a conclusive definition of the realm of freedom from the uncertain world of contingent fact. Roth can only give an imprecise indication of the freedom from constraint beyond the limits set by fixed and rigid concepts:

Hinter dem Zaun sind Ferien. Süße, lange Sommerferien.(1) Similarly Sameschkin's destination can only be defined imprecisely. Like Gabriel Dan in Hotel Savoy, Sameschkin echoes Kafka's horseman's response to the question "Wohin reitest du, Herr?'...nur weg von Hier..." (2) Just as

(1) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.883

(2) Franz Kafka. Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß, ed.Max Brod, S.Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1953, pp.389-

Sameschkin is unable to cross any fixed geographical boundary, so the threshold of language itself is also an internal limit: "...weil wir die Namen mit den Dingen verwechseln" (1), it is impossible to pass beyond the limits of language because these boundaries can only be expressed in terms of determinate flexibility, which is conveyed in Das falsche Gewicht through the image of the clearly determined, yet shifting seasons. As what lies beyond these limits cannot be defined in language, the limits themselves cannot be pressed into a single, narrow, rigid category. The incorporation of Roth's views on language into the formal structure of Das falsche Gewicht relates the novel to the conditions of its possibility in a more profound sense than in the earlier novels. The initial impulse of the novel is firmly rooted in Roth's cosmic irony, in his refusal to say where the truth lies. His solution to the problem is to point towards a final absence, the silence with which the novel must end. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein had argued similarly that the solution to life's problems amounted to no more than a disappearance of these problems:

...Freilich bleibt dann eben keine Frage mehr; und eben dies ist die Antwort. Die Lösung des Problems des Lebens merkt man am Verschwinden dieses Problems.(2)

Wittgenstein's solution also points ultimately in the direction of silence:

(1) Die weißen Städte, vol.III, p.883

(2) Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tractatus logico-philosophicus, cit.in Jürgen Habermas, Der deutsche Idealismus der jüdischen Philosophen, in: Philosophisch-politische Profile, Shrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1971, p.48

Ist nicht dies der Grund, warum Menschen, denen der Sinn des Lebens nach langem Zweifeln klar wurde, warum diese dann nicht sagen konnten, worin dieser Sinn bestand? (1)

Wittgenstein's ladder analogy in the Tractatus expresses with extraordinary clarity what we have already described as one of the central impulses in Roth's works: the tendency to alert the reader to the closed factitiousness of the narrative world with which he is presented:

Meine Sätze erläutern dadurch, daß sie der, welcher mich versteht, am Ende als unsinnig erkennt, wenn er durch sie - auf ihnen - über sie hinausgestiegen ist. Er muß sozusagen die Leiter wegwerfen, nachdem er hinaufgegangen ist...
Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen. (2)

Like Wittgenstein's, Roth's silence must be understood transitively, it operates beyond itself and incorporates what has already been said. Roth expresses this transitive quality of his silence in Die weißen Städte. In this final extract Roth clearly exhorts the reader to a scepticism which will challenge the spurious naturalness of "reality" as it is presented to us in the fiction. The transitive nature of the silence takes grammatical shape. Roth's silence is not a final, mysterious, extraneous element, but an integral part of the narrative structure:

Was ich sage, nimmt man nicht wörtlich. Was ich verschweige, ist gehört worden. Mein Wort ist noch lange kein Bekenntnis. Meine Lüge noch lange keine Charakterlosigkeit. Mein Schweigen ist nicht rätselhaft. Jeder versteht es. Es ist, als zweifelte man an meiner Pünktlichkeit nicht, obwohl meine Uhr falsch geht. (3)

(1) Ludwig Wittgenstein, in: Habermas, op.cit. p.48

(2) Ludwig Wittgenstein, op.cit. p.48

(3) Die weißen Städte, p.883

Chapter XIII.

Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht

Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht represents a development of the areas which Roth explored in Das falsche Gewicht. In the earlier novel, both theme and structure were centered upon investigating the possibility of a desire Roth had expressed in his essay Die weißen Städte:

Ich war neugierig, zu erfahren, wie es hinter dem Zaun aussieht, der uns umgibt. Denn uns umgibt ein Zaun, uns Menschen, die wir zur deutschen Welt sprechen. (1)

In the later novel it is also Roth's concern to explore the other side of the fence which marks the limits of rigidly defined concepts. By interweaving the motives and experiences of two contrasting figures, the exotic shah of Persia and the urbane Baron Taittinger, Roth draws the readers' attention to the fact that experience is continually evolving and is thus not amenable to rigid categorization.

The novel opens with the expression of the shah's dissatisfaction with his life: the abundance and variety afforded him in his own court cannot satisfy him. He undertakes the journey to Europe in order to push back the boundaries of his experience still further, to capture and possess a type of experience which eludes him in his familiar environment:

Er war nach Europa gekommen, um das Einzige zu genießen,

(1) Die weißen Städte (no date), in: vol.III, p.882

um das Vielfältige zu vergessen,...einmal nur, ein einzigesmal der Wollust des unrechtmäßigen Besitzes teilhaft zu werden und die ganz besondere, raffinierte Art der Europäer, der Christen, der Abendländischen auszukosten. (1002N.II.1003)

The Eunuch Patominos realizes that the quest for infinite variety must remain a futile one. Standing apart from the world, Patominos regrets his master's capacity for self-delusion:

"Warum bedauerst du uns, Patominos?" fragte der Fürst. "Aus vielen Gründen", antwortete der Eunuch, "besonders aber deshalb, weil die Männer dem Gesetz der Abwechslung unterworfen sind. Es ist ein trügerisches Gesetz: denn es gibt gar keine Abwechslung." (1002N.II.986)

The complicated chain of events which unfolds on the shah's arrival in Vienna, patterns of deceit skilfully orchestrated by Taittinger, confirms Patominos' view and exposes the primary impulse of the novel as a kind of comparative anthropology of linguistic systems, whose meaning is determined both by their usage and by the sets of desires which they embody. As we have seen, the shah is prompted to travel by an overriding desire to broaden his experience:

Er hatte Heimweh nach der Liebe, das ewige männliche Heimweh nach der Vergötterten, der Göttlichen, der Göttin, der Einzigen. (1002N.II.1004)

The concept of "die Einzige" is cynically undermined by the ingenious Taittinger, who seeks to provide the shah with the object of his desire without flouting social convention. The humble Mizzi Schinagl is called upon to double for the Gräfin W., whom the shah has selected as the one capable of fulfilling his expectations of the mysteries of European womanhood. The shah's experience exemplifies the dissolution of the rigid barriers between concepts: the substitution of Mizzi Schinagl leads to a blurring of distinctions, a

fusion of the two apparently mutually exclusive concepts of uniqueness and multiplicity. Through his obsession with uniqueness, the shah in a sense creates his own reality: the narrator describes how Josephine Matzner's shabby brothel, where the rendezvous between the shah and Mizzi takes place, becomes transformed in the exotic visitor's eyes:

Auch das Innere des Hauses Matzner war nicht wiederzuerkennen... Seine Majestät, der Schah, mußte glauben, daß er in eines jener verzauberten okzidentalischen Schlösser geraten sei, von denen ihm seine wunschselige Phantasie seit Jahren schon in Teheran so viel versprochen hatte. (1002N.II.1018-19)

This tendency of language to create its own reality, to arise as a result of the interplay between man and his environment, is illustrated repeatedly in the context of the fiction. The narrator describes how the grand vizier of Persia invokes an imaginary storm as the reason why the crossing to Europe takes such a long time. No sooner has the vizier spoken than nature cedes to the mysterious power of language which shapes reality:

So hatte der Großwesir gesprochen. Und siehe da: der Sturm war wirklich im Anzug. Und die Instrumente hatten ihn doch gar nicht angekündigt. Einfach die Lüge hatte ihn angekündigt, einfach die Lüge! (1002N.II.991)

Similarly, Taittinger's fleeting loyalty to Frau Kronbach is the result of the influence of the word "Leidenschaft" on his existence. Taittinger tries to convince himself of the vehemence of his passion by attempting to remain faithful to his mistress:

Frau Kronbach war seine Leidenschaft, so bildete er sich ein. Er hatte sich einmal gesagt, sie wäre seine Leidenschaft, er hatte sie zu seiner Leidenschaft ernannt, und er bewies es sich selbst, indem er ihr treu blieb. (1002N.II.994-5)

Roth exemplifies his conception of language as a projection of the mind rather than a neutral instrument of description through the distanced perspective of the narrator. Exploiting the distance which separates him from the events he is describing, the narrator makes it clear that there is no way of ascertaining the extent to which Taittinger's appraisal of the similarity between the Gräfin W. and Mizzi Schinagl can be said to correspond to some measure of objective truth:

Leider liegen die Tage, in denen unsere Geschichte spielt, schon so weit zurück, daß wir nicht mehr mit Sicherheit festzustellen vermögen, ob der Baron Taittinger recht hatte, als er der Meinung war, die Mizzi Schinagl sehe aus wie eine Zwillingsschwester der Gräfin W. (1002N.II.1005)

The narrator's authoritative statement is a demonstration of the power of language to set up its own world, to constitute its own "reality". The line of the narrator's perspective points towards a reaffirmation of Golubtschik's comments on language in Die Beichte eines Mörders:

Die Tat, die Handlung ist nur ein Phantom, verglichen mit der Wirklichkeit und gar mit der übersinnlichen Wirklichkeit des Wortes. (B.M.II.685)

The import of the distanced narrator's comments is that the language of the novel does not designate an order independent of itself. The tendency of language to structure reality, and the curious internality of the worlds of Taittinger and the shah are highlighted by the narrator's distanced perspective. Like the remote commentator, Eduard P. who appears in the concluding pages of Zipper und sein Vater, the narrator

...wandelt...an den Rändern der Ereignisse. Er säumte

sie ein gewissermaßen. Von außen her und als gehörte er nicht zu dieser Welt, nahm er Stellung zu ihr und ihren Vorgängen. (Z.I.520)

Viewed from the outside, the worlds of Taittinger and the shah, and the tenuous links between them, take on the aspect of closed, self-referential units.

Roth also illustrates the power of language to distort the structure of external reality through his treatment of the role of the press in Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht.

In his vituperative essay Der Antichrist (1934) Roth had already drawn attention to the tendency of the press to blurr the distinctions between right and wrong. Not only had such distinctions become unclear, the reader was deprived of the criteria to make such moral distinctions by the Babel of conflicting journalistic utterances. (1)

Journalism plays a similar role in distorting reality in Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht. The narrator describes how the police reporter Lazik systematically distorts even the most mundane elements of Mizzi Schinagl's encounter with the shah, simply in order to further the career of a colleague, Sedlacek, and to eke out his own existence when news is scarce:

Der Polizeireporter Lazik von der "Kronen-Zeitung",

(1) Der Antichrist, in: vol.III, p.398:

Manche Zunge wiederholte, was die meine gesagt hatte; aber sie wiederholte es anders, und zwar derart, daß wir beide nicht recht hatten. Ich wußte nicht mehr, ob ich Wahres oder Falsches gesprochen hatte, ob die anderen recht oder unrecht hatten; und dachte ich daran, daß die Welt auf einmal alle unsere tausend Zungen sprechen hört, so verstand ich, daß es ihr ganz unmöglich war, die Wahrheit zu hören; aber auch unmöglich, die Stimme der Wahrheit zu erkennen, in dem Falle, daß sie sich wirklich einmal vernehmen lassen sollte.

ein intimer Freund Sedlaceks, fand, daß es gerade jetzt angebracht und auch im Interesse des Polizisten angebracht sei, die Geschichte zu einer Art Skandal-affäre ausarten zu lassen. (1002N.II.1041)

The narrator makes it clear that the picture of external reality that emerges through the medium of the press is much less a reflection of the true state of affairs in contemporary society than a self-interested response by journalists who see their livelihood threatened by the Viennese predilection for trivial society gossip:

Es herrschte damals tiefer und übermütiger Frieden in der Welt. In den Zeitungen der Monarchie las man Hof- und Personalnachrichten,...und was dergleichen mehr an friedlichen, heiteren, sinnlosen Ereignissen in der nahen Welt und in der weiten vorkommen mochte. Gerichts- und Kriminalaffären von Bedeutung kamen in jener Zeit selten vor, und die Polizeireporter saßen in Grinzing beim Schopfner häufiger als im Café am Schottenring neben der Polizeidirektion. (1002N.II.1041)

The narrator demonstrates how short lived the interest of the press can be. No sooner has Josephine Matzner been the centre of journalistic attention than all interest in the court case involving Mizzi Schinagl and her lover Lissauer subsides. Through the narrator's description of Frau Matzner's reaction to the journalists' lack of interest in her affairs, Roth once again demonstrates the power of language to structure reality, and to exert a profound influence on the lives of ordinary people:

Am dritten Tage aber erstarb wie durch einen bösen Zauber, die Rede von den Brüsseler Spitzen,... Es war der Frau Matzner, als wäre sie in eine entsetzlich starre Stille eingetreten,... Nein! nicht einfach eingetreten war sie in diese makabre Stille, hineingestoßen hatte man sie. Sie erlitt die grausamen und bitteren Gefühle aller Verlassenen und Verratenen,... (1002N.II.1045)

By describing the process of the literary reshaping of reality within the context of the fiction, Roth alerts the

reader to the power of the novel to set up its own world, to the essential contingency of "reality" within the novel. The police reporter Lazik is aware that his discoveries will be robbed of their full impact if he relates them in a bald, unelaborate style:

Aber er beschloß, den Lesern der "Kronen-Zeitung" nicht sofort und etwa auf eine so plumpe Weise, wie es sein phantasieloser Kollege Keiler getan hätte, die ganze Geschichte vorzutragen. Diese Geschichte mußte im Gegenteil sorgfältig komponiert werden; komponiert mußte sie werden. (1) (1002N.II.1071)

The picture of language which emerges through the themes and structure of Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht is that language structures reality, it is not a tool for the recognition of the structure of the world. The relative complexity of the plot, and the close interweaving of the lives of various characters is a measure of the extent to which the field of human action is constantly evolving. As in the earlier novel, Das falsche Gewicht, the direction of Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht tends towards a demonstration of the essential meaninglessness of a rigid system of concepts: such static pictures of the world no longer obtain when applied to the field created by the irreducible mediations between subject and object. It is primarily through the figure of Taittinger that Roth

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- (1) Compare Roth's comments on the difference between a mere eye-witness report and the literary precasting of an event. See "Schluß mit der 'Neuen Sachlichkeit!'", vol.IV., p. 248-9.

Das Ereignis "wiederzugeben", vermag erst der geformte, also künstlerische Ausdruck, in dem das Rohmaterial enthalten ist wie Erz im Stahl, wie Quecksilber im Spiegel. Die Zeugenaussage, also die Mitteilung, ist eine Auskunft über das Ereignis. Der Bericht gibt das Ereignis selbst wieder. Ja, er ist selbst das Ereignis.

demonstrates the inapplicability of a fixed system of concepts. Before the intrigue which sets off the complex chain of events which constitutes the substance of the novel, Baron Taittinger confidently divides humanity into three clearly defined categories:

Es gab für ihn nämlich nur drei Klassen von Menschen: an der Spitze standen die "Charmanten"; dann kamen die "Gleichgültigen"; die dritte und letzte Klasse bestand aus "Langweiligen". Kirilida Pajidzani - das stand fest - gehörte zu den "Charmanten".
(1002N.II.995-6)

Not only are people and human conduct amenable to such rigid categorization, Taittinger also attributes the same range of fixed characteristics to places: the structure of Taittinger's world alters in accordance with the inconstancy of his moods:

Was kümmerte ihn Sievering? Es war noch schlimmer als langweilig: es war nämlich "fad". Einen Tag später allerdings war es "charmant" geworden. - Das kam von der Mizzi Schinagl. (1002N.II.1005)

Taittinger's role in the duping of the shah signals the beginning of the erosion of his clearly defined criteria of judgement: for once Taittinger is not immediately able to categorize and evaluate the effect any particular experience has on him. His reunion with Frau Matzner prompts him to reflect upon his situation and induces a feeling which he is unable to define:

Wieder einmal, wie so oft seit der fatalen Affäre mit dem Schah und seiner brüsken Rückversetzung zum Regiment, hatte ihn das starke, gefährliche und rätselhafte Weh gepackt, für das er keinen Namen wußte. Es war eine ungewöhnliche Mischung aus Schmerz, Scham, Sehnsucht, Liebe und Verlorenheit. (1002N.II.1051-2)

The disintegration of Taittinger's criteria for the evaluation of his own experience once again implies the

authoritative role of the narrator. The narrator, adopting Taittinger's own view of his life, enumerates the only three ways of escaping the tyranny of his entanglement with Mizzi Schinagl and the mysterious shah of Persia:

In solchen Stunden gab es nur drei Auswege: entweder man floh nach Wien,...oder man betrank sich; oder - oder: man erschoss sich. Krieg wäre ein Ausweg gewesen. Weit und breit aber herrschte ein satter, behäbiger, übermütiger Frieden in der Welt... (1002N.II.1052)

The use of the impersonal pronoun clearly reflects Taittinger's detached sense of the appropriate course of action in a difficult situation. The adjectives "satt", "behäbig", and "übermütig" convey his negative attitude to the state of peace which blocks one possible means of escape. By incorporating Taittinger's vocabulary into his description of his situation, the narrator highlights the subjective construction the baron puts on the world around him.

Taittinger's radical subjectivism is pushed to its extreme limits: "ein satter, behäbiger, übermütiger Frieden" reflects the projection of his own subjective requirements upon the external structure of reality. Taittinger's tendency to consign elements of his experiences to rigidly defined categories finds its objective expression in the narrative in the organized rigour of the army, which provides the definitive framework of the baron's life. Taittinger's dismissal deprives him of the security of an ordered existence, and tests his capacity to take responsibility for the ordering of his own affairs:

Zum erstenmal in seinem Leben sollte der Baron Taittinger erfahren, was es hieß: Schritte unternehmen. Beim Militär unternahm man keine Schritte. Alles war geregelt. (1002N.II.1053)

Taittinger's assessment of the role the army plays in regulating people's lives provides further confirmation of the power of language to create "reality":

Es gab keine Komplikationen, und wenn es welche gab, so waren sie die Folgen gewisser Vorschriften und Bestimmungen, welche die Macht hatten, die Verwicklungen, die sie schufen, auch gleichzeitig zu lösen. (1002N.II.1053)

The narrator indicates Taittinger's helplessness in situations where he himself must determine some course of action: confronted with the distressed figure of Mizzi Schinagl, the baron is at a loss for words:

Als er hart vor ihr stand, wußte er noch immer nicht, was er sagen sollte. Eine unbekannte Stimme diktierte ihm plötzlich, eine Stimme, die er noch niemals vernommen hatte. Er sprach ihr nach: (1002N.II.1056)

To a greater extent than Anselm Eibenschütz in Das falsche Gewicht, Taittinger is aware of the changes he is undergoing. The narrator describes how the loss of the definitive framework of his existence results in the gradual disintegration of the baron's personal identity:

Ein paar Augenblicke hörte er sich selbst sprechen, und es war ihm, als sei er schon alt, und er empfand das Lächerliche seiner Reden, und er übte Nachsicht mit sich selbst, und er bestand aus zwei Taittingers: einem jungen und törichten und einem alten und klügeren. (1002N.II.1058)

Military uniform becomes the symbol of the order of security which is such an essential part of Taittinger's life. When his friend Zenower comes to meet him out of uniform, the baron is not immediately able to fit him into any of the categories which define his existence:

Es war gar nicht der Rechnungsunteroffizier Zenower mehr, kein Untergebener, auch kein Vorgesetzter, aber auch ebenso kein Zivilist, sondern irgendein Wesen zwischen Welten, zwischen Rassen, eigenartig, unverständlich, aber auf jeden Fall düster und Unheil atmend. (1002N.II.1083)

Like the mysterious figure of Eduard P., who appears in the final chapter of Zipper und sein Vater, Zenower is distanced from the events which have so dramatically altered the course of Taittinger's life. It is through the figure of Zenower, the remote "Wesen zwischen Welten" (1002N.II.1083), that the operations of the narrative form itself are made manifest through the substance of the novel. Zenower attempts to check the despair which overcomes Taittinger when he realizes the full implications of the publication of his involvement in the duping of the shah, and of the consequences of his relationship with Mizzi Schinagl:

"Ich bin verloren, lieber Zenower!"...

"Verloren, Herr Baron, das ist es nicht. Sie kennen nicht Verlorene. Die Welt, in der Sie leben, verzeihen Sie, ist nicht die Welt, in der man wirklich verloren sein kann. Die wirkliche Welt ist sehr groß, und sie hat ganz andere Möglichkeiten der Verlorenheit."
(1002N.II.1092)

Zenower's measured response has a dual function in the novel: not only does it highlight Taittinger's naiveté, and the restrictedness of his vision, it also provides a form of representation of the status of the fiction as a whole, when it is set in a broader context. We might perhaps illustrate the relation of the content of Zenower's interview with Taittinger to the novel as a whole by reference to Wittgenstein's picture theory of language. (1) The central thesis in Wittgenstein's early work, the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1922) (2), is that language

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- (1) For a clear exposition of Wittgenstein's picture theory of language, see Anthony Kenny. Wittgenstein, Allen Lane, London, 1973, esp. chp. 4, pp. 54-72.
 - (2) Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (hereafter referred to as TLP), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1922.

consists of propositions which picture the world. The propositions are the perceptible expressions of thoughts: thoughts, in turn, are the logical pictures of facts. Wittgenstein describes the picture as a series of connected elements which constitutes its structure. The picture theory of meaning, however, entails a broader definition of the picture; it is more than the sum of its parts. The picture consists of a structure plus a pictorial relationship. This "abbildende Beziehung" (TLP.2.1514) is what relates the elements of the picture to the elements to which it refers. Wittgenstein stresses the necessity of the elements of correspondence between picture and reality. The logical form ("logische Form", TLP.2.18) of the picture is the pattern of its elements which corresponds to the relationship of the elements of what is pictured.

Our examination of the thematic structure of Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht has already focussed on the way in which the elements of the plot are construed to highlight the essential fluidity of concepts, especially Taittinger's rigid categorization of human experience. The power of language to structure reality has been a prominent aspect in our examination of the novel. Zenower's comments relate this tendency to the formal operations of the text itself. Zenower's picture of Taittinger's situation is that the baron lives in a restricted world which he consistently conflates with a far greater entity, which has a correspondingly greater potential to induce personal suffering. The pictorial relationship ("abbildende Beziehung", TLP.2.1514),

between the two worlds of Zenower's vision has its logical form ("logische Form", TLP.2.18) (1) in common with what it depicts: the relationship of the novel, a closed construct, a factitious entity, to the wider world with its infinitely increased range of possibilities. (2) Not only are the limits of Taittinger's narrow horizons highlighted, the form of the novel itself is exposed as an artificial construct. (3) The dual function of Zenower's picture is

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- (1) TLP. 2.18., p.40: Was jedes Bild, welcher Form immer, mit der Wirklichkeit gemein haben muß, um sie überhaupt - richtig oder falsch - abbilden zu können, ist die logische Form, das ist, die Form der Wirklichkeit.
- (2) TLP. 4.03., p.68: Ein Satz muß mit alten Ausdrücken einen neuen Sinn mitteilen. Der Satz teilt uns eine Sachlage mit, also muß er wesentlich mit der Sachlage zusammenhängen. Und der Zusammenhang ist eben, daß er ihr logisches Bild ist. Der Satz sagt nur insoweit etwas aus, als er ein Bild ist.
- (3) The analogy with Wittgenstein's picture theory is suggestive when extended and related to the status of literary criticism itself. In the Tractatus Wittgenstein had dismissed the efforts of philosophers to describe the world. It is impossible to describe the logical form of the world since a picture must be independent of what it depicts. There can be no pictures of the logical form of the world, since any proposition must share that logical form and cannot be independent of it. Applied to the field of literary criticism, this would imply a rejection of normative criticism, since this too entails an embellishment of a given structure, a dismantling in order to make the text state directly what it had stated indirectly. The type of "scientific" criticism advocated by Machery and Eagleton takes literary criticism in a different direction from attempts to give a precisely determinate and complete definition of the literary work, and parallels the undercutting of Wittgenstein's theory by Kurt Gödel and Alonzo Church. For Gödel demonstrated that a statement of number theory can be constructed which will be true only if it is not provable by the proof procedure given. Parallel developments in different fields of enquiry, the philosophy of mathematics and the theoretical underpinning of literary criticism show that the logical form of the work can be represented by some external axiomatic system. We can indeed get far enough away from the logical form to take a picture of it. (see TLP.4.12 -4.121)

re-enforced as it becomes clear that Taittinger is remarkably resistant to learning from Zenower's comments. Taittinger is comforted, and becomes still further entrenched within his limited horizons. The narrator's ironic mimicry of Taittinger's language serves to underline our impressions that the baron has indeed learned very little:

Taittinger war nunmehr "ehrlich" überzeugt, daß er seit gestern um viele Jahre älter, um viele und bittere Erfahrungen reicher geworden sei und viele Hindernisse überwunden habe; alles dank diesem Zenower. (1002N.II.1092)

Taittinger's gratitude towards Zenower leads him to extrapolate naively from the behaviour of an individual to the spiritual and moral disposition of an entire class - for Taittinger still clings to an ingenuous system of classification:

"Das Volk ist gut!" sagte Taittinger laut.
"Sie kennen es nicht", sagte Zenower, "das Volk!
Das Volk besteht aus Menschen. Der Mensch ist gut und schlecht." (1002N.II.1093)

Zenower's response is a reassertion of the impossibility of asserting the truth or falsity of a statement without first comparing it with the reality it purports to describe.(1)

Zenower's reaction to Taittinger's dismissal from the army is a metaphor for the indefinite nature of the reality behind fixed concepts, beyond the rigid categories into which Taittinger has resolved the flux of human experience:

(1) Again comparison with TLP. is illuminating, see TLP. 2.201 - 2.225, esp. 2.223 - 2.225.

2.223: Um zu erkennen, ob das Bild wahr oder falsch ist, müssen wir es mit der Wirklichkeit vergleichen.

2.224: Aus dem Bild allein ist nicht zu erkennen, ob es wahr oder falsch ist.

2.225: Ein a priori wahres Bild gibt es nicht.

Es war ein Leben, das hier zu Ende ging. Wie ein Sterbender den Körper ablegt, so zieht ein Soldat die Uniform aus. Zivil, Zivil: das war ein unbekanntes, vielleicht ein schreckliches Jenseits. (1002N.II.1100)

The narrator describes the powerful influence the defining rigour of army life exerted over Taittinger's existence. The baron's outlook and expectations are entirely conditioned by the rigid categories of military discipline which have imposed order on his life:

Der Baron Taittinger gehörte zu den nicht seltsamen Menschen, die, in der Disziplin des Militärs herangewachsen, vom Schicksal genauso Befehle und Anweisungen erwarteten wie von vorgesetzten Stellen. (1002N.II.1106)

After his dismissal from the army, Taittinger experiences considerable difficulty in integrating himself into civilian life: like his friend and confidant Zenower he becomes "ein Wesen zwischen Welten" (1002N.II.1083), unable to identify with any supportive group. The disintegration of Taittinger's clearly defined frame of reference re-enforces the parodic role of the narrator: the authoritative structuring role of the narrator becomes more pronounced as the baron's faith in the rigidity of his defining concepts declines. The ironic force which informs the structure of the novel is most powerfully expressed in a paradox: the narrator states authoritatively and conclusively the full force of Taittinger's discovery that it is impossible to give a conclusive definition of the manifold possible relations between word and object. Taittinger's discovery of the limited possibility of human knowledge of the world amounts to a reaffirmation of the essential fluidity of the conceptual world which Roth had posited in his essay Die

weißen Städte:

Man war nicht bestrebt, alles unverrückbar zu fixieren. Man wandelt sich jeden Augenblick, drüben, hinter dem Zaun. (1)

After his second visit to Mizzi in prison, Taittinger feels even more uncertain of his ability to make clearly defined moral judgements:

Zugleich kam es ihm auch vor, daß er durchaus nicht imstande sei, nie und nimmer imstande sein würde, die verworrene Welt zu begreifen... Er wußte nicht, ob ein Mensch gut sei oder nicht. Er hätte,...nicht sagen können, ob Lazik gut, schwach, gemein sei, ob Mizzi brav, verdorben, böse,... (1002N.II.1110)

Taittinger's extreme passivity in the face of the events which have befallen him is the last vestige of the rigid categories which once gave such clear outlines to his existence. If what has happened to him is incomprehensible, it is also irrevocable: in this way Taittinger tries in vain to impose limits on the flux of his experience:

Er fühlte nur irgendeine unbegreifliche und unlösliche Beziehung zur Mizzi, zur "Affäre". Unbegreiflich war all dies zwar, aber, so schien es ihm, beschlossen und besiegelt. Gegen Beschlossenes und Besiegeltes war einfach nichts zu machen. (1002N.II.1113)

Xandl Schinagl's exploits once again make the unfortunate Taittinger the focus of unwanted attention. His son's attempt on Ignatz Trummer's life threatens to ruin the baron's chances of being reinstated in the army. The inescapable web of complications surrounding his relationship with Mizzi once again makes Taittinger aware of the ponderable nature of reality: the baron comes to the realization that the categories of human understanding and experience are

(1) Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III. p.882

in constant flux:

Längst war die Welt nicht so einfach mehr wie früher; besonders nicht mehr seit der Stunde, in der man die Uniform abgelegt hatte. Längst gab es nicht nur drei einfache Kategorien von Menschen mehr: Charmante, Gleichgültige und Langweilige, sondern vor allem: Unerkennbare. (1002N.II.1133)

Like Eibenschütz in Das falsche Gewicht (1), Taittinger also realizes the implications of his behaviour:

Er war jetzt sogar imstande, die gleichgültige Heiterkeit seiner früheren Jahre zu erklären: Ahnungslosigkeit war es gewesen. (1002N.II.1132)

As Taittinger sees the implications of his conduct, he realizes that his attempts to return to the army must be thwarted. The publicity given to his involvement with Mizzi, and the duping of the shah by Mizzi's "Welt-Bioscop" make even Taittinger aware that there can be no easy solution to his situation. He confesses to Kalergi:

"Ich bin ungeduldig", sagte Taittinger. "Verstehst du das? Ich hab' mein ganzes Leben leichtsinnig gehandelt, ich seh's jetzt, aber es ist zu spät." (1002N.II.1141)

Unable to face the prospect of an uncertain future, Taittinger takes his own life, a final gesture of despair in the face of the continual flux of human possibilities. The narrator's ironic gloss on Kalergi's estimation of Taittinger's life highlights the inadequacy of all attempts to frame the motive content of human experience even in the most vague of concepts.

"Ich glaub', er hat sich verirrt im Leben. Derlei gibt's manchmal. Man verirrt sich halt!"
Dies war der einzige Nachruf auf den ehemaligen Rittmeister, den Baron Alois Franz von Taittinger.
(1002N.II.1143)

The novel ends with the second visit of the shah of Persia: the rumours circulating in the newspapers about the shah's

(1) Das falsche Gewicht, in: vol.II., p.816

proposed visit turn out to be true. By relating the end of the novel to its beginning, Roth illustrates the implications of the views on language expressed in Die weißen Städte. Just as Taittinger is incapable of continuing his life after he has realized that the flux of human experience cannot be arrested and set into fixed categories, so language itself is seen to contain its own internal limits. As we saw in the section on Das falsche Gewicht, it is impossible to pass beyond the limits of language because those boundaries can only be expressed in terms of determinate flexibility. Language ultimately proceeds in the same closed circles as Magdalene Kreutzer's carousel, or as the structure of the novel itself. In response to the shah's question as to whether the city has changed much since their last visit, Patominos comments wryly:

"Alles verändert sich, Herr", antwortete der Eunuch.
"Und alles bleibt sich dennoch gleich. Dies ist meine Meinung!" (1002N.II.1146)

It is through the figure of Patominos that Roth once again exposes the relativity of such concepts as change and illustrates the power of language as a tool in the construction of a private universe. Only death brings relief from the relativity of rigidly defined concepts:

"Wo gibt es Sicherheit?" fragte Schah.
"Drüben!" sagte der Obereunuch, "drüben, wenn man tot ist." (1002N.II.1147)

As what lies behind the limits of language cannot be defined verbally, the limits themselves cannot be set into a single category. As we saw in the section on Das falsche Gewicht, Roth was already aware of the dangers inherent in pressing reality into rigidly defined concepts:

Die Begriffe, die wir kennen, decken nicht mehr die Dinge. Die Dinge sind aus den engen Kleidern herausgewachsen, die wir ihnen angepaßt haben. (1)

These views on language are applied rigorously to the novel Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht. The dialectical relationship between form and content is reaffirmed as the structural operations of the novel are seen to re-enforce Zenower's earlier insights. We recall that Zenower had sought to check Taittinger's naive veneration for his image of "das Volk" by pointing out that the truth value of the baron's assertions could only be determined by comparing them to reality.

..."das Volk! Das Volk besteht aus Menschen. Der Mensch ist gut und schlecht." (1002N.II.1093)

Zenower's response not only highlighted the naiveté of Taittinger's vision, it also indicated the curious independence of language vis à vis reality. (2) This theme is taken up again in one of the final tableaux of the novel, which images the narrative situation. (3) The image of the "Panoptikum", the "Welt-Bioscop", is the device through which

(1) Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III. p.882

(2) Compare TLP.

2.22: Das Bild stellt dar, was es darstellt, unabhängig von seiner Wahr- oder Falschheit, durch die Form der Abbildung.

2.221: Was das Bild darstellt, ist sein Sinn.

(3) Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht, vol.II.1138.

Der Vorhang ging leise kreischend auf, und Taittinger sah maßlos erschrocken die Mizzi auf einem roten Thron. Es war in der Tat unmöglich zu erkennen, ob sie wach-
sen oder lebendig war... Zaubерlicht kam aus einem
Rundbrenner,... Auf dem Kopf trug die "Lieblingsfrau
des Schahs" einen türkischen Halbmond,... Reglos saß
die Mizzi - war sie es wirklich? - auf ihrem roten
Thron.

As a symbol for the operations of language, the reactions the Panoptikum provokes in Taittinger are a further demonstration of the independence of language vis à vis reality.

Roth finally demonstrates the internal relation, the "logical form" (see TLP.2.18) which links the form of the narrative to what it represents, that is to the status of the narrative form itself in a wider context. As we saw in the earlier analogy (see above page 307), Wittgenstein stressed the necessity of the elements of correspondence between the "picture" and the reality it represents. Wittgenstein's deductions from his basic definition of the proposition as a picture can further illuminate the way in which Roth highlights the closed factitiousness of the narrative - a tendency we have noted throughout his novels. If it is impossible that the internal relation between picture and reality be absent, then it cannot be informatively stated that it exists. Wittgenstein insists that such a relationship must be shown and not stated:

Der Satz kann die logische Form nicht darstellen,
sie spiegelt sich in ihm...
Was sich in der Sprache ausdrückt, können wir nicht
durch sie ausdrücken.
Der Satz zeigt die logische Form der Wirklichkeit.
Er weist sie auf. (TLP. 4.121) (1)

Similarly, Roth demonstrates the power of language to set up its own world through the image of the "Panoptikum". The closed factitiousness of the fiction is exhibited, mirrored in Mizzi Schinagl's "Welt-Bioscop". The "Panoptikum" also functions at a simpler symbolic level, as the representation

(1) Compare Roth. Brief an Bernard von Brentano. Frankfurt, 19.XII.1925. in: Joseph Roth. Briefe 1911 - 1939, ed. Hermann Kesten, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln/Berlin, 1970, p.70-71.

Nicht nur, wenn man nichts zu sagen hat, muß man schweigen, sondern auch, wenn man etwas nicht genau ausdrücken kann.

of the self-referential quality of Mizzi Schinagl's life, as a demonstration of the way she lives from her past experiences, both emotionally and materially.

Roth finally draws our attention to the status of the fiction as a closed realm and ironizes his own role as creator in Tino Percoli's final comments on the "Panoptikum":

"Ich könnte vielleicht Puppen herstellen, die Herz, Gewissen, Leidenschaft, Gefühl, Sittlichkeit haben. Aber nach dergleichen fragt in der ganzen Welt niemand. Sie wollen nur Kuriositäten in der Welt; sie wollen Ungeheuer. Ungeheuer wollen sie!"
(1002N.II.1148)

Chapter XIV.

Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker

So entstand in mir der Gedanke einer Verwirklichung Gottes durch den Menschen; der Mensch erschien mir damals als das Wesen, durch dessen Dasein das in seiner Wahrheit Absolute den Charakter der Wirklichkeit gewinnen kann. (1)

Roth's last literary work, his "Testament" (2), Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker marks the culmination of the views on language expressed in Die weißen Städte and exemplified in the novels Das falsche Gewicht and Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht. The irony which informed the structure of the earlier novels reaches its fullest expression in Roth's last work. Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker is Roth's final gesture of renunciation: yet it is also an affirmation of life, a final attempt to answer the shah's question in the concluding pages of Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht, which is in many respects a metaphor for the driving impulse of Roth's entire literary output: "Wo gibt es Sicherheit?" (II.1147)

The structure of Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker emerges

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- (1) Martin Buber. "Das Problem des Menschen", in: Werke. Bd.1, Kösel Verlag, Verlag Lambert Schneider, München/Heidelberg, 1962, p.384.
- (2) David Bronsen. Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, Köln, 1974, p.582.
"Mein Testament", sagte (Roth); 'meine Verleger werden sich daran für meine Vorschüsse schadlos halten.'" Zitiert von Gotthard Jedlicka, "Erinnerungen an Joseph Roth", in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 9.2.1957.
(Bronsen, chp.19, ftn.231)

as a paradoxical relation between linguistic scepticism and Hasidic faith. Roth's limpid prose is a vivid pictorial representation of the nature of the silence which he had indicated as a solution to the problem of existence in Das falsche Gewicht. Roth was keenly aware of the pitfalls of a facile exhortation to silence and he carefully distinguishes between silence which is profound and silence which stems from having little or nothing to say:

Mein Schweigen ist nicht rätselhaft. Jeder versteht es. (1)

The motive force which underpins Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker is a questioning of the viability of fixed concepts: the themes of the earlier novels Das falsche Gewicht and Die Geschichte von der 1002. Nacht are taken up again as the essential fluidity of the conceptual world is re-affirmed. We have already seen how Roth disparaged all attempts to arrest and categorize the indeterminate nature of reality. In Die weißen Städte Roth evokes an ideal state where such mistakes are avoided:

Man war nicht bestrebt, alles unverrückbar zu fixieren. Man wandelt sich jeden Augenblick, drüben, hinter dem Zaun. (2)

The very title of Roth's last work, Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker encapsulates Roth's belief that language cannot give access to the nature of reality, or reflect the structure of the external world. Implicit in the notion of a "Legende" is the fact that its truth value is not subject

(1) Joseph Roth. Die weißen Städte (no date), in: vol.III, p.883.

(2) Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III, p.882. See also p.883.
Es ist das Kennzeichen der engen Welt, daß sie das Undefinierbare verdächtigt.

to external verification. The very title of the work thus reaffirms the conception of language which emerged in the earlier novels. Human language is viewed as a projection of the mind, rather than as a picture of the world: in fact language creates its own reality. Roth's "Testament" openly parades its closed factitiousness, and emerges, contrary to the views expressed by Claudio Magris (1), as a final affirmation of the mysterious power of the word. Roth's "Legende" seems to emerge from a vacuum: it has no past and no future. The language of the text does not designate an independent order. The self-referential quality of the fiction is a measure of its independence from reality: it demonstrates no more than a possible state of affairs. The curious internality of the "Legende" can perhaps be illustrated by analogy with Wittgenstein's picture theory:

Das Bild stellt dar, was es darstellt, unabhängig von seiner Wahr- oder Falschheit, durch die Form der Abbildung. (2)

Within the context of the fiction Roth displays his lack of concern for the genesis of narrative detail. The facts of the case stand for themselves; they create the world of the narrative:

Dieser Obdachlose sah zwar genauso verwahrlost und erbarmungswürdig aus wie alle die anderen, mit denen er sein Leben teilte, aber er schien dem wohlgekleideten

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- (1) Claudio Magris. Weit von Wo. Verlorene Welt des Ostjudentums (trans. J. Prasse), Europa Verlag, Wien, 1974, p.321. Auch Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker ist Ausdruck einer doppelten, bitteren Verweigerung, der Abkehr von der Literatur ostjüdischer Herkunft und gleichzeitig, in noch stärkerem Masse, von der Literatur im allgemeinen.
- (2) Ludwig Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922, 2.22.

Herrn gesetzten Alters einer besonderen Aufmerksamkeit würdig; warum wissen wir nicht. (1)
(LhT.III.229)

The narrator does not explain the miracles which befall Andreas: they emerge as a natural extension of his everyday experience. The miracles are validated only within the context of the fiction, no appeal is made to external criteria of judgement. The rigid category distinctions between dream and reality are deliberately blurred. Through his description of Andreas' dream the narrator exposes the essential relativity of concepts. The narrator describes how Andreas, refreshed and restored after his dream, is inclined to confuse it with "ein wahres Wunder", in short, with what constitutes the fabric of his existence:

Nach dieser Nacht, in der er diesen Traum geträumt hatte, erhob er sich erfrischt und wie vor einer Woche, als ihm noch die Wunder geschehen waren, so als nähme er den Traum für ein wahres Wunder.
(LhT.III.242)

The miracles which shape Andreas' existence are further validated within the fiction. As miracle is synonymous with reality in the narrative, its meaning arises not only from correlation with Andreas' own private, incommunicable experiences: miracles have the currency of reality in the wider context of the fiction. The staff in the luxurious hotel where Kanjak brings his unkempt friend Andreas express

(1) Roth's comments on his "Das Märchen vom Geiger", Der Neue Tag, 28.12.1919, displays a similar lack of concern for the substantiation of narrative detail.

Es ist sehr leicht, Märchen zu erzählen. Wäre das, was ich hier schreibe, eine Erzählung, eine Novelle oder so was, ich müßte sagen, woher der...Musikant die Geige habe. Aber in einem Märchen ist es alles so einfach. Die Geige ist da und basta. Man frage also nicht, wie sie in den Besitz des Musikanten kam.

In: David Bronsen, op.cit. p.584.

no surprise at seeing such dereliction in such opulent surroundings:

Aber weder der Portier noch der Liftboy...verwunderte sich darüber. Denn es war einfach ein Wunder, und innerhalb des Wunders gibt es nichts Verwunderliches. (LhT.III.246)

The narrator describes how Andreas decides to celebrate his birthday after he receives 200 francs from the mysterious stranger under the bridge. Andreas' choice of a day bears no relation to his actual birthday, which could be established within the context of the fiction; once again he constructs his own reality:

Er kaufte also eine Zeitung und sah, daß es ein Donnerstag war, und erinnerte sich plötzlich, daß er an einem Donnerstag geboren worden war, und ohne nach dem Datum zu sehen, beschloß er, diesen Donnerstag gerade für seinen Geburtstag zu halten. (LhT.III.232)

The narrator also describes how Andreas puts his own construction on the behaviour of those around him. The respect the waiters show towards him in the café where he is celebrating his "birthday" is enough to convince Andreas that it is indeed his birthday:

Dies schmeichelte unserm Andreas besonders, es erhöhte ihn auch, und es bestätigte ihm seine Annahme, daß er gerade heute Geburtstag habe. (LhT.III.233)

Andreas' use of language, the tool for the construction of his world, is interwoven with the general pattern of his existence: even such simple concepts as "birthday" cannot be understood outside the behavioural surroundings which give them their meaning. It is at this point that Roth's criticism of the resolution of the flux of human experience into fixed and rigid categories of language intersects with the Hasidic tradition towards which Roth

himself was to look for answers to the besetting problems of human existence. The central elements of the critique of language implicit in the form and content of Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker are paralleled in the field of theology in Martin Buber's Die Chassidische Botschaft (1). Just as Roth had rejected the autonomy of language vis à vis the constantly evolving field of human action, so Buber too rejected what he considered the insidious tendency to segregate spiritual and secular experience. For Buber, man's relationship with God could not be understood outside the context of his day-to-day activities: God emerged from the communal life of man, and was part of the texture of man's social existence:

Der wirkliche Umgang des Menschen mit Gott hat an der Welt nicht bloß seinen Ort, sondern auch seinen Gegenstand. (2)

Buber gives a graphic description of the process of rendering man's relationship with God independent of the network of relations which constitute the fabric of his existence:

Aller spezifische Gottesdienst ist...nur die immer erneute Bereitung und Heiligung zu diesem Umgang mit Gott an der Welt. Aber es ist eine Urgefahr,... daß sich von der menschlichen Seite des Umgangs etwas ablöst und verselbstständigt, sich rundet, sich scheinhaft zur Gegenseitigkeit ergänzt, sich an die Stelle des wirklichen Umgangs setzt. Die Urgefahr des Menschen ist die "Religion". Das sich

(1) Martin Buber. "Die Chassidische Botschaft", in: Werke Bd. 3. Schriften zum Chassidismus, Kösel Verlag, Verlag Lambert Schneider, München/Heidelberg, 1963, pp.789-895

(2) Martin Buber, op.cit. p.744

so Verselbständigende können die Formen sein, in denen der Mensch die Welt Gott zuheiligte, das "Kultisch-sakramentale"; nun sind sie nicht mehr Weihung des gelebten All-Tags, sondern seine Ablösung;... (1)

Roth's concern to break down the barriers which divide human experience into rigid categories echoes the Hasidic message as interpreted by Buber. Buber describes how the rigid categorization of the flux of human experience, and of man's involvement with God, is anathema to the Hasidic faith. Man's religious experience is inextricably bound up with his daily life: the divisions between the sacred and the profane are transcended at a stroke:

In der chassidischen Botschaft ist die Trennung von "Leben in Gott" und "Leben in der Welt", das Urübel aller "Religion", in echter, konkreter Einheit überwunden. (2)

Man is no longer trapped within the boundaries of fixed concepts; his life is the continual expression of a close personal relationship with God.

Unter vollkommener Wahrung der Weltentrücktheit und Weltüberlegenheit des doch welteinwohnenden Gottes

(1) Martin Buber, op.cit. p.774.

It is illuminating to compare Roth's comments on cinema in Der Antichrist (1934). Roth alerts his readers to the dangers inherent in the film industry's tendency to render human life absolute, to make its forms independent of the living fabric of day to day existence:

Es ist also eine unheimliche Gewalt, die einen lebendigen Menschen, das Geschöpf Gottes, und noch eines, dem Er die Gnade geschenkt hat, seinen Schatten zu beleben, den Er also gewissermaßen doppelt belebt und begnadet hätte, dazu verurteilt, als der Schatten seiner selbst zu erscheinen... Ein einziges Mal hat er sein Bild, seine Gestalt photographieren lassen. Ein einziges Mal: für alle Ewigkeit aber bleibt das Flüchtigste aller Flüchtigkeiten unserer irdischen Existenz: nämlich der Schatten, eine reale Begegnung...es gibt eine Art Menschen, die nicht als Menschen gelebt haben, sondern als Schatten:... (vol.III, pp.381-2)

(2) Martin Buber, op.cit. p.748.

ist hier die breschenlose Ganzheit des Menschenlebens in ihren Sinn eingesetzt: ein Empfangen der Welt von Gott und ein Handeln an der Welt um Gottes willen zu sein. Empfangend und handelnd weltverbunden steht der Mensch, vielmehr nicht "der", sondern dieser bestimmte Mensch, du, ich, unmittelbar vor Gott. (1)

We have already seen how Roth was keenly aware of the need to transcend the rigid categories of human experience. In Die weißen Städte Roth expressed the limitations of language when it comes to describing the flux of human experience:

Ich war neugierig, zu erfahren, wie es hinter dem Zaun aussieht, der uns umgibt. Denn uns umgibt ein Zaun, uns Menschen, die wir zur deutschen Welt sprechen. (2)

In accordance with the Hasidic message, Roth gives us a determinate representation of the disintegration of the distinctions between man's religious experience and his day-to-day existence. Long before Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker was written, Roth had expressed his distaste for the abstract in literary representation. In a letter to Hans Natonek, 14.X.1932, Roth criticises the latter's work in the following terms:

4.) Glänzend ist die Sprache, bis auf die sehr abstrakten Bemerkungen. Im Roman hat nichts Abstraktes vorzukommen. Überlassen Sie das Thomas Mann! Sie haben selbst zu viel konkrete Anschauungsfähigkeit. (3)

(1) Martin Buber, op.cit. p.748.

(2) Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III, p.882

(3) Joseph Roth. Briefe 1911-1939, p.238. A firm rejection of the abstract is also, according to Buber, firmly entrenched in the Hasidic outlook. Compare Die Chassidische Botschaft, p.787:

Das persönliche Dasein...kann aber auch kein theoretisches sein, das heißt eins, das den Gegenstand, auf den er gerichtet ist, dadurch erfassen will, daß es von der Wirklichkeit abstrahiert oder mystisch-kontemplativ hinter die Wirklichkeit zu dringen sucht. Es kann nur ein vitales Dasein sein, das unmittelbar mit der Wirklichkeit denkt, was es denkt, und betrachtet, was es betrachtet: nicht mehr und nicht weniger, als was ihm die Konkretheit dieses Lebens darbietet.

Through the life of Andreas Kartak Roth demonstrates "die breschenlose Ganzheit des Menschenlebens" (see previous page, note 1). Roth illustrates the essential fluidity of the conceptual world through Andreas' life. Just as concepts cannot be correlated with single objects in any clear and simple relationship (1), so too Andreas' life cannot be defined in terms of any clear, stable patterns. In response to the wealthy stranger's unsolicited offer of money, Andreas explains that he fears he cannot accept it because the stranger cannot trace him, as he has no clearly established residence:

"...Ich kann das Geld, das Sie mir anbieten, nicht annehmen, und zwar aus folgenden Gründen:...drittens, weil Sie auch nicht die Möglichkeit haben, mich zu mahnen. Denn ich habe keine Adresse. Ich wohne fast jeden Tag unter einer anderen Brücke dieses Flusses. (LhT.III.230)

The motive content of Andreas' life cannot be arrested and set into clearly defined categories because it is comprised of mere contingencies: Andreas never knows in advance in which direction events will take him:

...er lebte von Zufällen, wie viele Trinker. (LhT.III.231)

Andreas is one of society's outsiders: he lives beyond the pale of society's expectations. Like the persona of Roth in Die weißen Städte, Andreas "wandelt sich jeden Augenblick, drüben, hinter dem Zaun." (see above page 319, note 2). Living outwith society's norms, Andreas is relieved of the necessity to represent fixed categories of human behaviour.

(1) See Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III, p.882.

Die Begriffe, die wir kennen, decken nicht mehr die Dinge. Die Dinge sind aus den engen Kleidern herausgewachsen, die wir ihnen angepaßt haben.

His position is once again succinctly expressed by the narrator in Die weißen Städte:

Ich sehe in den Straßen und in der Gesellschaft genauso aus wie zu Hause. Ja, ich bin draußen zu Hause. Ich kenne die süße Freiheit, nichts mehr darzustellen als mich selbst. Ich repräsentiere nicht, ich übertreibe nicht, ich verleugne nicht. (1)

Like the narrator in Die weißen Städte who shakes off the rigid categories which defined his existence on his journeys through the French provinces, Andreas too has no clear idea of the direction of his life. His response to the stranger's opening remarks confirms his lack of commitment:

"Ich wüßte nicht, daß ich einen Bruder hätte, und ich weiß nicht, wo mich der Weg hinführt."
(LhT.III.229)

The concluding pages of Die Legende vom heiligen Trinker mark the apotheosis of the close relationship between Roth's views on language and the central message of the Hasidic faith. The primary impulse of the novel arises at the crossing point between a demonstration of the role of language as a projection of the mind in structuring reality, and the emergence of a conception of God which similarly arises out of the context of living human experience. The final scene in the bistro is a demonstration of the Hasidic belief that God resides in man. Andreas is convinced that the young girl who is waiting for her parents to come out of mass is in fact the saint Therese to whom he owes the 200 francs which the stranger gave him under the

(1) Die weißen Städte, in: vol.III, p.882

bridge:

"Ah", rief Andreas darauf, "das ist reizend! Ich habe nicht gedacht, daß eine so große, eine so kleine Heilige, eine so große und so kleine Gläubigerin mir die Ehre erweist, mich aufzusuchen, nachdem ich so lange nicht zu ihr gekommen war." (LhT.III.256)

Once again Roth demonstrates the essential relativity of such concepts as "groß" und "klein".

The conclusion of Roth's last work points towards a reiteration of Buber's dictum:

...der Mensch erschien mir damals als das Wesen, durch dessen Dasein das in seiner Wahrheit Absolute den Charakter der Wirklichkeit gewinnen kann.
(see above page 318, note 1)

The conclusion of the novel amounts to a reformulation of the Hasidic belief that God realizes himself through man, and that man realizes himself through God. The dissolution of the rigid conceptual boundaries between the sacred and the profane is most cogently and succinctly expressed in the epithet which describes Andreas: "der heilige Trinker". (1)

(1) Martin Buber emphasizes how the categories of the sacred and the profane are blurred in the Hasidic faith.

See Die Chassidische Botschaft, p.802.

So grundlegend auch im Judentum die Unterscheidung von Heilig und Profan war, es erwachte doch immer wieder der Wunsch, dem Heiligen Wirkung und Einfluß auch im Bereich des Profanen zu verleihen und so die Brücke zu schlagen... Nichts in der Welt ist dem Heiligen ganz fremd, jegliches Ding kann ihm zum Gefäße werden.

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